

CITY OF COUNTRYSIDE

OPEN SPACE

MASTER PLAN

Adopted by the
City of Countryside City Council
February 28, 2007

THE CITY OF COUNTRYSIDE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report serves as an update to the guide (adopted by the City Council in 1998) for planning the City of Countryside's park and recreation sites and facilities through the year 2023. The City of Countryside commissioned the Plan in July of 1997 for the purpose of creating a comprehensive park and recreation master planning tool to assist them in the expansion of the park system, acquisition of land, recreation programming and the effective utilization of existing parks and facilities owned and leased by the City. The Plan contains text, maps, tables and charts to illustrate existing conditions, plan recommendations and various concepts.

The City of Countryside has a jurisdictional planning area of approximately 2.82 square miles, an equalized assessed valuation of approximately \$327.9 Million and, a current estimated City population of approximately 5,991 (2000 census) people, a population that is forecast to grow to approximately 6,287 by 2030. The City owns, utilizes and operates 9 parks totaling over 22.5 acres for City of Countryside residents to enjoy.

A detailed inventory of the City's parks was conducted, and the condition of the facilities in each was evaluated. The evaluation of the parks consisted of a broad set of criteria including but not limited to aesthetics, recreational value, safety, and whether or not facilities and equipment in the parks conformed to Consumer Product Safety Commission and Americans with Disabilities Act standards. The latter is important in terms of satisfying State requirements for acquisition and development grant applications.

A demographic analysis of the City was also conducted which determined that the supply of park land (excluding regional parks and golf course property) under local control in the City is low with just 3.76 acres of park land per 1,000 residents. This compares to a nationally accepted minimum standard of 10 acres per 1,000 residents. In order to improve the balance of park land provision around the City and, provide a level of supply capable of meeting the recreational needs of City residents, substantial additional park land will be required over the Plan period to the year 2023.

The City of Countryside park system is made up of three classifications of parks: community, neighborhood and mini-parks. However, pedestrian barriers criss-crossing the Community created by major roads carrying large volumes of traffic limit the usability of some of the parks and make them difficult to reach for the very young and aging segments of the population. These barriers present a challenge to the City as it attempts to provide adequate park and playground space for all residents.

Park facility and open space acreage standards are discussed in the text of the report and a full set of recommendations are made for each park and the provision of additional parks to meet the current and future recreational needs of community residents. These standards have been based on nationally recognized minimum standards that should be met. Given the shortage of existing open space in many parts of the Community, a priority is placed on improving existing facilities including playgrounds, acquiring additional land where possible and developing a pedestrian and bicycle trail in the City.

The recommendations include a detailed program for implementation including a phased ten year capital improvement program and an explanation how all of the recommendations could be addressed by the City over the Plan period. It is illustrated by the use of tables which set out the cost and timing of recommended improvements. It is illustrated by the use of tables which set out the cost and timing of recommended improvements. The Consultant recommended a City wide enhancement and park acquisition and development

program to meet existing and future needs. It is recommended that \$2.6 million (based upon a 5.0% inflation rate, and subtracting the \$1.8 million in improvements that were completed at Countryside Park in 2001.) of improvements be implemented over the Plan period. The City will be eligible to receive grant funding for a significant number of the various improvements from a number of State and Federal grant sources. *The actual cost to the City for the first 10 years of the Plan is estimated at approximately \$2.3 (based upon a 5.0% inflation rate) million dollars over the Plan period which translates to an average annual capital improvement budget of \$230,000.* If the recommendations of this Plan are fully implemented, the City will see in an increase in the number of park acres per 1,000 residents from the 3.76 that currently exists to approximately 5.4 acres by the year 2023.

The success of this Plan will benefit both the existing users and the next generation of City residents. The foresight and wisdom of City officials and staff should be commended. In this tumultuous era characterized by tax caps, citizen disdain for municipal government, anti-spending legislation and increasing citizens' service expectations, the tasks faced by City government and managers are highly complex. Full implementation of each of the issues included in the recommendations in this Plan will allow the City to keep pace with changing citizen requirements and expectations while, at the same time, providing flexibility in meeting the recreational needs of future generations.

Map 1

Regional Location



City of Countryside, Illinois

CHAPTER I - PREFACE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Since its incorporation in 1965 to the present day mature Community with a population of approximately 5,991 (source: 2000 census), the City has demonstrated that it is possible to successfully maintain a predominantly residential character and high quality of life for residents while at the same time accommodate commercial interests. Central to Countryside's appeal as a place in which to live has been the attainment of a careful balance between development, growth and, the provision and preservation of open space and recreational facilities for all ages.

Historically, Countryside's growth has been rooted in the transportation network and its proximity to Chicago. The existence of the Burlington Northern railroad in LaGrange to the north and the Rock Island railroad in Willow Springs to the south played a significant role in the early settlement of the area in which Countryside sits. While these factors may have provided the initial impetus for the initial development of the City, its appeal to prospective residents was the fact that while close to Chicago, it was physically and socially detached from it and, hence, also from the problems associated with City life. For many residents, moving to Countryside represented a milestone in, and, a dramatic improvement of, the quality of their lives. The construction of the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) and the Stevenson Expressway (I-55) have both played significant roles in increasing the accessibility and hence the attractiveness of the Community as a place in which to work and live.

Much of the character of the City can be attributed to careful planning and foresight. Growth has been well planned and has not been permitted to take place unless consistent with the City's goals and objectives as contained in the City's various development ordinances. The City has sought to achieve a balance between employment, commercial, residential and open space and recreation oriented uses. This long-standing approach to the growth of the Community has resulted today in the City owning, operating and utilizing nine parks and facilities, including the community facility of Countryside Park, comprising a total of nearly 22.5 acres. Pleasantdale Park District owns and operates the approximately 6 acre neighborhood park - Soehrman Park in the southern part of the Community. Additionally, the City and Pleasantdale Park District jointly own and, the Park District operates, the 9 hole golfing facility of Flagg Creek Golf Course situated at the western edge of the City.

However, like everything else, recreational facilities age with time and may no longer conform to current safety and accessibility standards. There has also been a general national trend of increased demand for recreational facilities and programs over the past 20 years or so. It is therefore now time to update the entire City open space and recreation system to establish how well it is meeting the needs and expectations of City residents.

In 1997, in order to develop a planning instrument for the provision of future recreational sites and facilities for its residents and workers, the City commissioned Thompson Dyke & Associates, Ltd. to assist in the preparation of an Open Space Master Plan for the City to guide park and recreational facilities and programs in the City over the next 10 to 20 years. This updated Open Space Master Plan is a continued testament to the commitment of the City to ensure that future generations of residents will enjoy the same or better level of recreational opportunity. The original Plan represents the outcome of over five months of study and analysis. City staff and the Playground and Recreation Board worked tirelessly with the Planning Consultant to ensure that this Plan is the right one for Countryside. Such an approach will go a long way toward providing for the park and recreational needs of City residents and workers well into the next millennium and beyond.

1.2 MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission Statement that will act as the foundation for the function and activities of the City Recreation Department is as follows:

The City of Countryside Recreation Department exists to maintain and enhance the quality of life for all citizens of Countryside by providing park, recreation and leisure opportunities through organized programs and by acquiring, developing, maintaining, preserving, and enhancing recreation areas, open spaces and facilities, in the most cost efficient manner.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

The recreational opportunity presented by the City of Countryside, while significant, must be examined now to determine if it is meeting the needs and expectations of its citizens. Like most other governmental park and recreation providers, the City is faced by a number of challenges in maintaining and enhancing its parks and open space recreation areas and will likely continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Such challenges include a demonstrable increased demand for recreational facilities reflective of national trends and tight fiscal constraints.

While the City strives to offer its residents, workers and visitors a wealth of facilities and programs to meet the needs of all ages and physical abilities, if the quality and level of open spaces and recreational facilities is determined to be unsatisfactory, the City must develop a plan for a program of improvement. Existing and future residents and workers deserve, and, will no doubt expect, the same or better access to recreational opportunity as that which they enjoy at present. In addition, the City will need to plan for the maintenance and enhancement of both existing and future facilities. All of these issues have to be addressed within an overall constraint of limited financial resources and manpower.

The City Recreation Department is committed to providing its citizens and workers with a high quality of services and to augment and enhance its facilities and programs where necessary. To achieve this, however, the City must take action now to ensure that its park and recreation facilities and programs meet the needs and expectations of existing and future residents alike. A coordinated Master Planning strategy, including a detailed capital improvement plan component, can go a long way to providing a workable framework

within which to address the pressures of increased public demand, facility maintenance and enhancement and budget constraints.

The City's recognition of the importance of adequately addressing these issues has culminated in this Open Space Master Plan. The resultant planning framework should provide a solid foundation upon which the future success of Countryside's park and recreation facilities and programs can be built.



CITY OF COUNTRYSIDE ZONING MAP

ZONING DISTRICTS

[Light Green]	"R-1"	ONE FAMILY
[Yellow]	"R-2"	ONE FAMILY
[Light Green]	"R-3"	ONE FAMILY
[Light Green]	"R-4"	TWO FAMILY
[Light Green]	"R-5"	GENERAL
[Light Green]	"R-6"	RURAL
[Light Green]	"R-7"	RETAIL
[Light Green]	"R-8"	LIMITED SERVICE
[Light Green]	"R-9"	SERVICE & WHOLESALE
[Light Green]	"O"	LIMITED OFFICE SPACE
[Light Green]	"M-1"	LIMITED MANUFACTURING
[Light Green]	"M-2"	GENERAL MANUFACTURING
[Light Green]	"P-1"	PUBLIC & SEMI PUBLIC
[Light Green]	"SU"	SPECIAL USE
[Light Green]	"PUD"	PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT
[Light Green]	"CDP"	CONSENT DECREE PENDING

FLOOD PLAINS

--- FLOODWAY LIMIT
--- FLOODPLAIN LIMIT (100 YEARS)

CITY OF COUNTRYSIDE POPULATION
PER 2000 U.S. CENSUS: 5,991
CITY OF COUNTRYSIDE AREA IN
SQUARE ACRES: 1,807.96
CITY OF COUNTRYSIDE AREA IN
SQUARE MILES: 2.63

VILLAGE OF
INDIAN HEAD PARK

PLAGG CREEK
GOLF COURSE

EDGEWOOD VALLEY
COUNTRY CLUB

LAGRANGE
HIGHLANDS

SUNDOWN MEADOWS
LAKE
IDA
FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
OF
COOK COUNTY

ARIE CROWN
FOREST PRESERVE

STEVENSON (I-55) EXPRESSWAY

TRI-STATE (I-204) TOLLWAY

VILLAGE OF
WILLOW SPRINGS

U.P.S.

VILLAGE OF
LAGRANGE

VILLAGE
OF
McCOOK

QUARRY
MALL

JOVIC COURT

COUNTRYSIDE MEADOWS
ALL PRIVATE ROADS
EXCEPT 61ST STREET

VILLAGE
OF
HODGKINS

PARK LEGEND

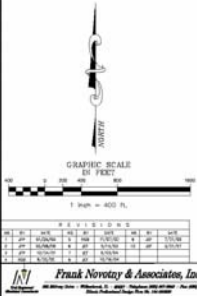
- 1 COUNTRYSIDE PARK
- 2 IDEAL PARK
- 3 BRANCATO PARK TOT LOT
- 4 SHERMAN-MICHAEL MEMORIAL TOT LOT
- 5 HOLLANDS PARK
- 6 CITY PARK
- 7 COUNTRYSIDE PLAYGROUND TOT LOT
- 8 SHERMAN PARK
- 9 WOODLAND RIDGE PARK
- 10 MEMORIAL PARK

STEVENSON (I-55) EXPRESSWAY

TOLLWAY

TRI-STATE (I-204) TOLLWAY

"This zoning map is provided in accordance with State of Illinois requirements. The map is a graphic representation of the zoning of the property in the City of Countryside. While every attempt is made to keep the zoning map accurate and up to date, it should be used for reference only. The zoning information contained herein is retrieved from the zoning ordinances on file with the City Clerk."



Map 2 Jurisdictional Boundaries

CHAPTER II - INVENTORY OF CITY PARKS AND RECREATION RESOURCES

2.1 EXISTING GOVERNMENTAL JURISDICTIONS

Map 2 illustrates the jurisdictional boundaries of the various relevant units of local government in or abutting the City of Countryside. These include, the City of Countryside boundary, abutting municipalities, park district, township boundaries, forest preserve district, elementary school districts and high school districts. The school districts are important in the context of this Plan because they represent a significant potential recreational resource horn which residents can often draw with the appropriate agreements in place.

The four school districts with all or part of their jurisdictions falling within the Countryside City limits are: Lyons Township High School District #204, Elementary and Middle School District #105, Highlands Elementary and Middle School District #106 and Pleasantdale Elementary and Middle School Districts #107. In the case of Countryside, however, there is only one school property in the Community, that being Ideal school situated on 58th Street. The entire City falls within one township, that being Lyons Township.

Unusually, the jurisdictional boundaries of the City and that of a park district overlap for the provision of parks and recreation services in the southern part of the Countryside. Pleasantdale Park District extends horn the west into the area west and south of the Arie Crown Forest Preserve. The Park District jointly owns the Flagg Creek Golf Course with the City and also owns and operates a neighborhood park in the area - Soehrman Park that is approximately 6 acres in size. While this park is taken into consideration in terms of assessing the supply and distribution of park land throughout the City, the facilities within the park were not inventoried nor were they evaluated during the preparation of this Master Plan.

Map 2 further reveals the extent of land ownership by the Cook County Forest Preserve District - the Arie Crown Forest Preserve - including Sundown Meadows and Lake Ida. This Forest Preserve land is important because not only does it constitute a significant regional recreational resource for Countryside residents to enjoy but, also, certain recommendations made later in the Plan will require cooperation and agreement with the Forest Preserve. Map 2 was recently updated to include the recent annexation of the area south of I-294 known as the 5th Avenue Cutoff neighborhood. There is more detail on the area in Chapter 4.

2.2 ELEMENTS OF AN OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

Any open space system is comprised of a hierarchy of park elements that vary both in size and function and, collectively define it. The City of Countryside, like other local authorities charged with the responsibility of providing and managing a park and recreational system, must apply a rational hierarchy to the facilities it operates because each individual element of the system performs a particular function in terms of service provision. The following is a summary of the various park types that comprise the overall system.

Ornamental Parks (OP)

Ornamental parks usually consist of a small lot or partial lot area with the primary purpose of complementing the aesthetics of a particular area. Ornamental parks seldom provide developed recreational facilities and are relatively expensive to maintain. However, they are important because they help to visually break-up the built streetscape and provide rest areas for pedestrians.

Typically, these parks functionally relate to memorials or represent a site of some historic significance. The City of Countryside owns and operates one ornamental park. In 1999, the City acquired the property at the intersection of 55th Street and Plainfield Road. This is the site of Memorial Park which was constructed in 2000.

Small Play lots, Playgrounds and Mini-Parks (MP)

Mini-parks, tot-lots or playgrounds are primarily designed for young children generally up to ten years of age. This type of facility is usually located in residential areas where backyards and open space are at a premium, or they comprise an area within a larger park or school where in most cases less than 1.0 acre is devoted to playgrounds. These facilities are usually developed on parcels of between 1.0 acre and up to 10.0 acres in size and generally provide recreational opportunities for children, senior citizens or other age groups, depending on their location or the characteristics of the population they serve. Thus, mini-parks may provide a variety of facilities such as play apparatus, table game areas, small court game areas, conversation sitting areas, shuffle board and landscaping.

Play and sitting areas are usually landscaped where possible to provide a safe and aesthetically pleasing enclosure. Small play lots, playgrounds and or mini-parks (MP) constitute 5 out of the 9 parks in the City and are named below:

- Brancatto Park Countryside
- Countryside Playschool
- Holland's Park
- Srejma-Michalek
- Woodland Ridge

Neighborhood Parks/Playgrounds (NP)

The neighborhood park represents an open space area for both active and passive recreation for all age groups and is usually between 5 and 15 acres in size. Ideally NP's should adjoin elementary or junior high school properties which should be designed to provide indoor recreation facilities for older children and adults. By using both the school building and the park area year around, better recreational opportunities can be offered. These parks normally feature a mix of picnic tables, conversation/sitting areas, benches, a nature preserve, open play fields, soccer, hard surfaced courts, creative play apparatus, and landscaping elements. Ideal School Park, which is subject to an informal use agreement with School District #105, and, City Park are the neighborhood parks utilized by the City. While City Park falls short of the usual 5 acre minimum size requirement at 3.7 acres, it does perform a neighborhood function. Soehrman Park, as previously noted, is owned and operated by the Pleasantdale Park District.

Community Parks (CP)

Community parks serve recreational needs that require more space than is generally available at neighborhood facilities and generally range in size from 15 to 100 acres in size. Again, the actual size may be less than the 15 acre minimum depending on the individual development characteristics of the facility. Recreational opportunities usually offered in City CP's include many of those offered in neighborhood parks such as tennis courts, soccer fields, football, basketball, open play areas, ball fields and play apparatus for young children and advanced uses. More community oriented facilities are also included such as group picnic shelters, hiking trails and a community center to provide for the needs and interests of all age groups and physical abilities.

These facilities include concessions and food service, handball, racquetball, game rooms, gymnasium, cultural arts, fitness center and a stage. The community parks offer winter recreational facilities to City residents such as ice skating, sledding and cross country skiing. They also function to conserve and protect environmentally sensitive and natural resource areas. Community parks also serve as neighborhood and mini-parks for nearby residents. Countryside has one community park – Countryside Park.

Regional Parks (RP)

Regional parks are generally the responsibility of large communities such as Countryside, counties or regional authorities such as the Cook County Forest Preserve District. RP's usually contain a minimum of 100.0 acres although parks on smaller sites may qualify as a RP if the importance of the facility in the region warrants such a designation. Such parks also usually offer facilities that people would travel a considerable distance to such as a beach or boating lake.

In the City of Countryside, the land under the ownership of the Forest Preserve associated with the Arie Crown Forest Preserve (including Sundown Meadow) qualifies as a regional park due to its size (approximately 370 acres) and unique nature of the facilities including approximately 3 miles of trails.

Trails and Associated Open Space (T)

During the past 15 years or so, perhaps one of the most marked changes in parks and recreation demand and facility provision has been that of an explosion in the provision of trails and associated recreational facilities and activities. The contemporary trend toward healthier lifestyles and fitness oriented activities has led to a perceived public need for such facilities. However, apart from the trails within the Forest Preserve, such a trend has not manifested itself to date in the City of Countryside.

One of the main recommendations of this Plan will be for the City to actively pursue the development of a trail system. While the Arie Crown Forest Preserve does contain a significant trail element, there is no trail connecting the Preserve to Countryside Park and, no trail connecting Countryside Park to any other park in the City. With the recent renovations to Countryside Park, there is a lighted walking path in the park, but again, this path does not connect to other parks or areas of the City. Given that the potential for expanding the acreage of park land in the City is limited, the creation of a trail system throughout the City could significantly enhance the recreational opportunities for community residents to enjoy.

Special Parks and Facilities (SP)

Special parks and facilities differ from neighborhood and community parks in that they offer unusual or specialized facilities and opportunities. Examples of such facilities that may be visited by people in the entire Community and by those of surrounding communities include nature preserves, zoos, stadiums, outdoor theaters, and teen/senior centers. SP's may be located in a Neighborhood, Community or Regional Park or they may constitute an entirely separate entity. The only SP in Countryside at present is the Lake Ida fishing lake situated within Sundown Meadow Forest Preserve.

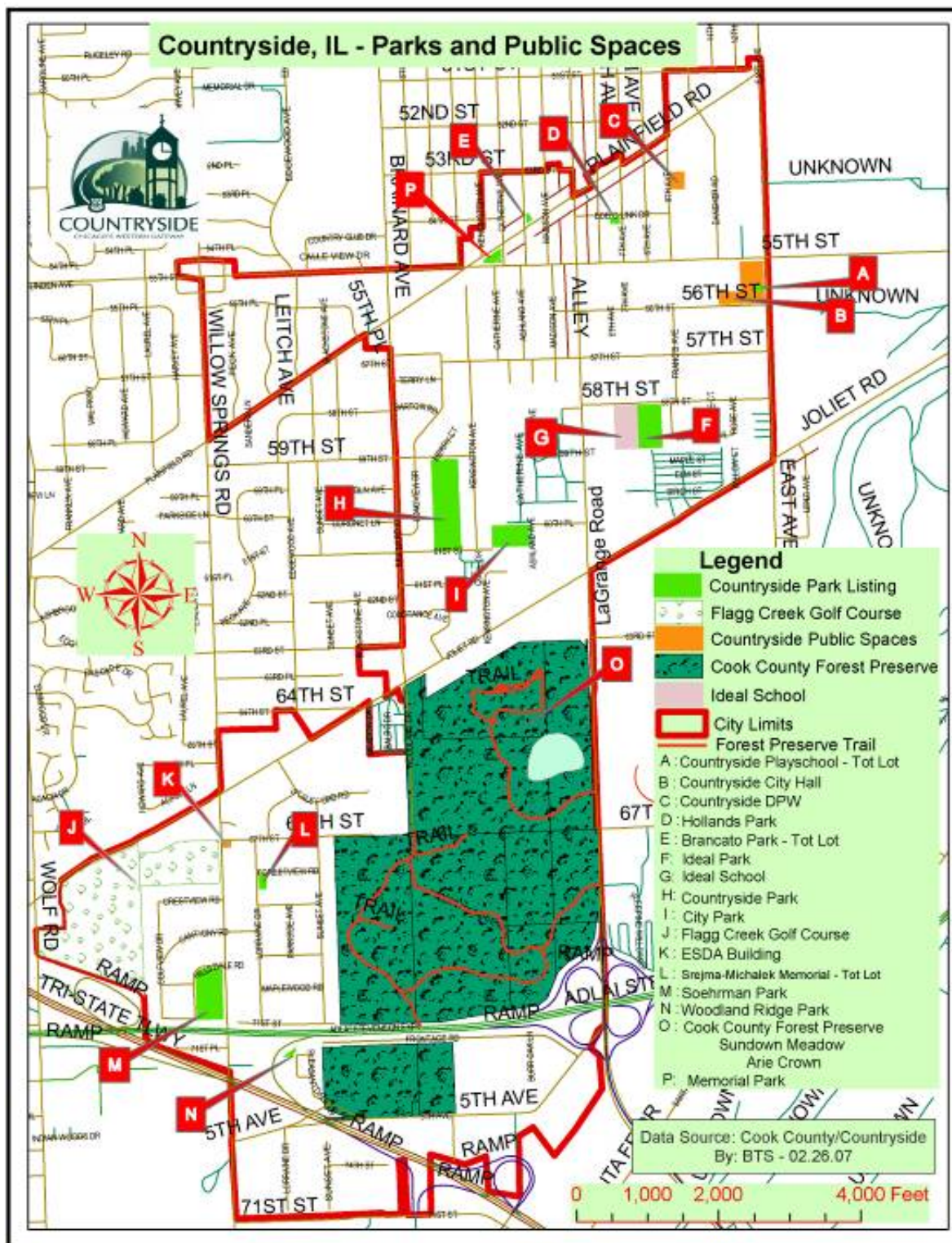
2.3 EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

2.3.1 Inventory and Evaluation of Existing City Open Space and Recreation Facilities

The City of Countryside currently utilizes a total of 22.5 acres of public parks and recreation land for City of Countryside residents and workers to enjoy. Of this total, the City owns approximately 17.5 acres with an additional approximately 5 acres the subject of an informal cooperative use agreement with Elementary and Middle School District #105 at Ideal School. As previously outlined, Soehrman Park, while owned and operated by Pleasantdale Park District, represents an approximately 6 acre neighborhood park for use by surrounding residents. However, since this is not a City owned or operated facility, TD&A did not inventory or evaluate individual park facility elements.

The City is also responsible for the maintenance of additional areas of open space in street rights-of-way and non-park beautification areas throughout the City. Visitors to the Community may also benefit from the variety of facilities within the parks that are currently available, although as will be revealed, there is a considerable need to improve many of these facilities.

As a part of the planning process, in 1997, the consultant visited every park and conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the various facilities at each (Tables 1 & 2 over). As part of the Plan updating process, City staff visited every park to review the recommendations made in 1997 and to examine the current needs of each park. Table 1 is a quantitative summary of park and recreation provision by park. The parks have been broken down to reveal not only the size in acres, but also the type and number of the various facilities in each park. Table 2 summarizes the results of the qualitative evaluation of the various parks and facilities. Each park and facility has been evaluated utilizing a variety of criteria. These include the general condition and age of equipment, whether or not the facilities and equipment conform to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) standards, and the recreational value of the equipment and facilities. The following is an overview of the inventory and evaluation of all City operated parks and facilities:



Map 3

Existing Parks &
Recreational Facilities,
Service Areas and
Pedestrian Barriers

Brancatto Park (MP) 0.3 Acres

Brancatto Park is located at the corner of Ashland Avenue and Plainfield Road.

Single-family residential development surrounds the park on all sides. This play lot contains older play equipment, which doesn't meet the current CPSC guidelines. This equipment has been poorly maintained and needs to be upgraded. The play area surface is comprised of sand that, if laid to the proper depth, can meet current CPSC guidelines. A sand surface, however, is not ADA accessible and an alternative surface such as Fibar should be explored. Most of the play equipment appears to meet the CPSC fall safety zone requirements.

The park is fully enclosed with a 42" high chain link fence. The fence around the park is in reasonably good condition; however there is not a gate or some type of "deterrent" to keep small children from running out of the park and possibly into the street. There is one attractive mature tree within the play area fence and several benches are distributed around the perimeter of the play area. A 42" high stone monument with a bronze plaque memorializes John R. Brancatto Jr. There is a partially improved alley immediately north of the park containing two parking spaces.

City Park (NP) 3.7 Acres

City Park is located at the intersection of 60th Place and Ashland Avenue south of the Countryside Plaza. South of the park is a car dealership, hotel and the Country Club mobile home park. Immediately to the west of the Park are single family homes. The park has a well developed Little League field, soccer field, benches and drinking fountain.



.Field improvements were made to the City Park soccer fields. Other improvements include: benches and a drinking fountain.

Table 1: Park Inventory

Park Name	Type	Approx. Size (Acres)	Shelter/ Gazebo/ Pavilion	Indoor Recreation Facility	Basketball	Baseball	Softball	Football & Soccer	Tennis Court	Play Equipment
Brancatto	MP	0.3						1		
City	NP	3.7					1	1		
Countryside Playschool	MP	0.3		1				1		
Countryside Park	CP	11.2	1		2	1	1	1	2	1
Holland's	MP	0.3						1		
Ideal School	NP	5.0			2	1	1	1	2	1
Memorial Park	OP	0.9								
Srejma-Michalek	MP	0.5			1			1		
Woodland Ridge	MP	0.3								1
Total:		22.5	1	1	5	2	3	7	4	3

Table 2: Park Evaluation

Park Name	Type	Approx. Size (Acres)	Aesthetics	Basketball	Baseball	Softball	Football & Soccer	Tennis Court	Play Equipment	Play Surface
Brancatto	MP	0.3	B						C	B
City	NP	3.7	C		B	C	B			
Countryside Playschool	MP	0.3	C						B	B
Countryside Park	CP	11.2	A	B,B	A	B	B	B,B	BC	B
Holland's	MP	0.3	C						C	B
Ideal School	NP	5.0	C	C,C	B	C	B	B,B	A	A
Memorial Park	OP	0.9	A							
Srejma-Michalek	MP	0.5	B	C					C	C
Woodland Ridge	MP	0.3	B						B	B
Total.		21.3								

Park Type: CP - Community Park MP – Mini Park NP – Neighborhood Park OP – Ornamental Park

Grading A = Excellent B = Good C = Fair D = Poor

The park tends to attract grazing geese which can present a variety of problems. There are two parking lots providing a total of approximately 70 spaces immediately north and east of the park. These lots are accessed via 60th Place, the shopping center service drive and Ashland Avenue. The 61st Street R.O.W. south of the park extends west to Kensington Avenue and beyond to Countryside Park. The park is also contiguous to an approximately 125' green buffer strip that extends northward between the rear lot lines of the single family residences on the east side of Kensington Avenue and Countryside Plaza.

Countryside Playschool (MP) 0.3 Acres

Countryside Playschool is situated immediately north of Village Hall on East Avenue. The building currently houses the Recreation Department offices and a pre-school facility. There is a play area and associated structure with a sand play surface immediately northwest of the building. This play structure is in good condition and appears to meet current CPSC guidelines. While the sand surface does meet CPSC guidelines, it is not ADA accessible and alternative surface should be sought.



The play area at Countryside Playschool is heavily used providing an important recreational facility in conjunction with this major program for City residents.

Countryside Park (CP) 11.2 Acres

Countryside Park is the largest park in the City and Countryside's only community size park. The park is located between 59th and 61st street one half-block west of Kensington Avenue. This park is an elongated rectangle in shape aligned on a north-south axis. Single family homes abut the east and west boundaries. While there is vegetation in the park, most of the larger trees are located along its perimeter and in the southwest corner of the site.

Parking lots at both the northern and southern ends of the park can accommodate approximately 60 cars. The northern parking lot abuts the 59th Street R.O.W. with perpendicular spaces accessed directly from the Street. The southern lot is accessed via 61st street and a driveway.

There is a maintenance shed immediately adjacent to the northeast corner of the southern parking lot. Recent renovations to this park have made the park a very attractive site. There are two softball diamonds, a soccer field, playground equipment, lighted tennis courts, sand volley ball courts, a skate park, an inline hockey rink, lighted walking paths, and two gazebos. During the renovation of the park, staff aggressively landscaped the area to provide for detention on site. This has affected the northernly most softball field.



Countryside Park is the City's only community size park but its central location allows it to serve most if Countryside's residents within this 1 mile radius service area.

Holland's Park (MP) 0.3 Acres

Holland's Park is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of 7th Avenue and Bob O' Link Drive. Single family residential abuts the park to the west and south. The park is fully enclosed with a 42" high chain link fence and is protected from traffic by safety bollards along the street frontages. There is a small shelter, a small open lawn area, a stone memorial and a lighted flagpole on the northeast corner of the park. The play area contains play equipment that has probably lived out its life expectancy. Not all of the play equipment meets current CPSC guidelines, the "horse swings" and the "spring ride on animals" are old and need to be replaced with up to date equipment and the sand play area surface does not comply with ADA accessibility standards. In addition to the equipment, additional landscaping would benefit this park. In recent years, the benches were replaced and a picnic table was installed.

Ideal School Park (NP) 5 Acres

Ideal School Park, as the name suggests, is located directly adjacent to Ideal Elementary School on 58th street between LaGrange Road and 9th Avenue. The park is bounded on the south by a drainage ditch situated within the unimproved part of the 59th Street R.O.W. Immediately to the east of the School is a multifamily housing development and immediately south of the park beyond the drainage ditch is Country Club Mobile Home Park. Residents of the mobile home park can access the park via a bridge across the drainage ditch.

The use of both the play area and remainder of the park by the City is subject to an informal cooperative use agreement with School District #105. The play area and equipment are located immediately to the east of the School building. The play equipment was donated to the City via the Saturn Playground Project with City residents installing the equipment. The play surfacing is mulch and both the equipment and surface meet both CPSC and ADA guidelines. Some of the worn and broken pieces of playground equipment were replaced in 2005. The play area is set amongst several large trees and shrubs. There is a new handicap accessible fountain adjacent to the play area.

The School District-owned portion of the park contains two lighted tennis courts, one lighted full-court basketball court that can be flooded for ice skating, a larger basketball area with four hoops and a large open field with a softball diamond and backstop, a soccer field and the building itself contains indoor facilities and rooms for various programs. The light poles adjacent to the basketball and tennis courts are painted with metallic paint only on their bottom half. The top half appears to be painted with red oxide primer, which contains lead, and should be avoided in play areas. The chain link fence, including gates and signage, around tennis court is in very poor condition and represents a hazardous condition, the tennis court appears to be due for resurfacing, tennis court bench is missing a slat and benches need to be painted, play area surface depths and drop zones should be checked some timbers around the play area are deteriorated and should be replaced immediately, benches need repainting. The northeast access to the play area is very muddy. Consideration should be given to installation to a sidewalk or similar surface.

Srejma-Michalek Park (MP) 0.5 Acres

This park is located on the corner of Lorraine and Forestview Drive. Single family residential lots abut the Park east and south. The play lot contains older play equipment, ("horse swings") not all of which meets current CPSC guidelines. The play area surface is a wood based material. The play area is surrounded by benches with some shade provided by a number of mature canopy trees scattered throughout the Park. Traffic safety bollards ring the entire property, however these bollards are rotting and in need of replacement. A chain link fence should be installed as well. A small parking area on the north side of the park that provides parking for approximately 10-12 cars. The south side of the Park contains a full court basketball court that can be flooded for ice skating. On the northwest corner of the park there is a flagpole and memorial boulder in honor

of two City fire fighters. In recent years, a few more benches have been added to this park. The felt underlayment in the play area was exposed, suggesting inadequate play surface area material depth. The basketball court surface is in need of sealing. Spikes that secure the new plastic timbers around the play area project above the timbers.

Memorial Park (OP) 0.9 Acres

Memorial Park, located on a triangular piece of property at the intersection of 55th Street and Plainfield Road was built during the City of Countryside's 40th anniversary celebration in 2000. Once a dilapidated section of the community, the City of Countryside purchased the land and redeveloped it into a community focal point. Constructed in memory of those who served in the U.S. military, the park is the location of the City's clock tower and carillon. The clock tower has become the most visible symbol of Countryside and was recently incorporated into the City's logo. The carillon can be programmed to play up to 350 songs and can typically be enjoyed by park visitors at noon and 6pm each day, playing songs even more frequently during the winter holiday season.

Woodland Ridge (MP) 0.3 Acres

Woodland Ridge is a newly created Mini Park located in the Woodland Ridge subdivision. The Woodland Ridge subdivision is a part of the 5th Avenue Cutoff neighborhood annexed by the City in 2003. The play lot contains newer equipment, which should meet the CPSC guidelines. The play area should meet the current CPSC and ADA standards. The felt underlayment in the play area is exposed, which suggests that there is an inadequate material depth. Brick pavers were installed in the parkway to address the chronic mud problem. There is a masonry wall that spans the park from the eastern to western boundaries; this could be a fall hazard however. There is not a well-defined boundary on the south end, and there are also concerns with erosion. The back slope area should be planted in shrubs or bushes as the fall hazard area exceeds 30 inches. Such plantings will deter access to the area and minimize the fall hazard. The property line at the south end of the park should be more fully established, and steps taken to eliminate erosion.

2.3.2 Existing Service Areas and Pedestrian Barriers

Map 3 also provides a graphical representation of the interrelationships that exist between the service areas of the different parks and park categories, and the barriers to pedestrian movement, particularly children, that exist throughout the City. An analysis of the combination of all such interrelationships provides a clear picture of the differing levels of provision throughout the City and reveals areas where a potentially deficient level of service may require attention.

The service areas for the different levels of park facility indicated by the colored circles of differing sizes are reflective of a hierarchy of park service area radii. That is, community parks have a service area of one mile; neighborhood parks a service area of one-half miles, and one-quarter mile radii for mini-parks. The ornamental parks and regional facilities are not assigned a service area because of their special characteristics. Ornamental parks have the function of providing a break in the urban streetscape, aesthetic enhancement of the street scene and historical interest. The Forest Preserve, while not City property does draw from a population base that extends well outside the City limits and itself extends outside and east of the City.

Community Parks

The analysis of the service areas of the City's community park – Countryside Park indicates that the park is well situated in terms of providing Community Park access to City residents. The exceptions to this rule are a small number of residents in the northeastern-most and southernmost parts of the City. However, residents in the southern part of the City do have easier access to the Forest Preserve property than others in the Community. As such, while the consultant does have recommendations for improvements to existing facilities, no additional community parks are recommended for the City.

Neighborhood Parks

City Park is the only neighborhood park that is owned by the City of Countryside. Ideal School Park is owned by Elementary School District #105 and subject only to an informal cooperative use agreement with the City. Soehrman Park is owned and operated by the Park District and therefore beyond the control of the City. Clearly, therefore, there is a need for the City to address the provision of neighborhood sized parks throughout the community. Even considering the service areas of all three parks, there are large areas of the city with no neighborhood park service area coverage. Fortunately, however, in addition to the potential for solidifying the agreement with school District #105 and potential improvements to City Park, there does appear to be the opportunity for improving the level of provision of these parks with several sites having been identified during the research phase of the study that will be discussed more fully during Chapter 4 - Recommendations.

Mini-Parks

Map 3 also indicates the extent of service area coverage of the City's 5 mini parks. Again, as with neighborhood parks, the situation is complicated by the fact that the pedestrian barriers which restrict the movement of, and, hence, accessibility of, children to these parks. There are no such facilities at present in the entire area south of 55th, west of LaGrange and north of Joliet Road with the exception of Woodland Ridge. While, as with neighborhood parks, the recreational facilities found in mini-parks often constitute an element of a larger neighborhood or even community facility, there seems to exist a need for additional facilities throughout much of the City. However, as with neighborhood parks, several sites have been identified that could constitute realistic opportunities for the provision of additional mini-parks in the City. Additionally, it will later be recommended in Chapter IV that the City improve the existing mini-parks in the Community.

Pedestrian Barriers

As mentioned above, the pedestrian barriers criss-crossing the City effectively divide it into a number of specific areas in terms of accessibility afforded to residents with respect to neighborhood and mini-parks in the City's park system. The Stevenson expressway (I-55), the Tri-State Tollway (I-294), 55th Street, Plainfield Road, LaGrange Road, Joliet Road and Willow Springs Road are all significant physical barriers to the movement of residents in general, and, particularly to the movement of small children. These barriers are indicated on Map 3 and, in combination with the service areas of the parks, are intended to graphically demonstrate the effect on movement and accessibility they pose. For the most part, the barriers represent roads where the movement of traffic is characterized by both higher volumes and higher speeds than found on typical minor residential streets.

2.3.3 Other Open Space System Resources and Facilities (Public and Private)

In addition to the parks and recreational facilities operated and either owned or utilized under agreement by the City of Countryside, as previously mentioned, there are a variety of other recreational facilities distributed around the City. The locations of these facilities are also shown on Map 3 and are comprised of: Soehrman Park, Flagg Creek Golf Course and the Forest Preserve property. While these properties do not constitute part of the City's public park and recreational system, they are nevertheless important when evaluating how well the City is served by recreational facilities in general. Some of the sites of the facilities might present opportunities for agreements between the City and the other taxing districts, and cooperative ventures that can result in the expansion of the City open space and recreational system.

The Arie Crown forest Preserve

The most significant of the recreational resources in the City that are not under the control of the City relate to the Forest Preserve District comprised of the Arie Crown Forest Preserve including Sundown Meadows and Lake Ida. While Forest Preserve property is considered a regional resource serving a much larger population than Countryside, the total acreage of the Forest Preserve owned property within the City limits is approximately 370 acres. This represents approximately 20 percent of the jurisdictional area of the City and approximately twenty three times the amount of City owned open space. The Preserve also contains approximately 3 miles of trail. The recreational potential of this land for the City residents must therefore be considered in any open space master plan for the City.

Forest preserves are often viewed as a natural sanctuary from an otherwise urban or suburban environment appealing to, and representing a recreational resource for, all age groups. They are a green haven helping to break up urbanized areas. However, the recreational use of such property is usually limited to either passive recreation and/or picnicking, to hiking and bicycling, to fishing and occasionally, to boating/sailing. They tend not to provide local residents with programmed recreational activities and they are often inaccessible to the very young and elderly segments of the population due to the pedestrian barriers crossing the City. As such they are not included in the 10 acre per thousand residents minimum open space acreage provision standard adopted by the NRP A and should not be regarded as a substitute for the other elements that constitute a complete open space system comprised of all sized parks in the hierarchy. Nevertheless, if properly integrated into the Community's system, they can represent an extension of it and enhance its recreational and educational value.

One of the most striking features of the Forest Preserve in Countryside when viewing Maps 2 and 3 is that it is not connected to any other recreational or educational facility by a trail. One of the recommendations of the Plan that should be explored is the development of a trail within the city that not only provides recreation in their own right but also links city parks and provides a connection to the Forest Preserve.

School District Property

As previously noted, while there are four school districts with all or part of their jurisdictions falling within the City, there is only one school property in Ideal School and the associated park. The City has recognized the potential of school district property in the past by purchasing Finn Park (now Countryside Park) from School District #105 in 1988. The City currently has an informal use agreement with School District # 105 for the use of its park at Ideal School for programmed recreational activities. However, this agreement does not guarantee such use of this property by the City in the long or even the medium term.

Firstly, one of the options that should be examined is a binding long-term use or lease agreement between the City and School District #105. Second, there may exist the potential for the City entering into a cooperative venture to develop a trail that connects the school to the Forest Preserve for such activities as student educational excursions. Such a trail would also provide city residents with an important recreational resource.

Flagg Creek Golf Course

Flagg Creek Golf Course is located south of Joliet Road and West of Willow Springs Road and opened for play in 1993. It is a 9 hole, par 33 golf course with a club house facility. The course is approximately 2,500 yards in length from the back tees and provides a challenge to even the most accomplished players with water featured on 5 holes. The Course represents what can be achieved through a cooperative venture being jointly owned and managed by the City and the Pleasantdale Park District which oversees the maintenance and day-to-day operation of the facility.

Score Tennis & Fitness Center

The Score Tennis & Fitness Center is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Joliet Road and Willow Springs Road. This important private recreation center provides a variety of recreation opportunities to its approximately 1,500 members, many of which are Countryside residents. The building was constructed approximately twenty years ago and has been used primarily as a private tennis facility. More recently, the facility has diversified to offer a broader range of activities including soccer, volleyball and indoor golf lessons. An advertisement for the facility is currently included in the Recreation Department brochure and there would appear to be the potential for a cooperative venture with the Department, particularly in relation to teen programs and activities, which some residents feel are lacking in the City.

Score Tennis & Fitness Center currently has an agreement with the Park District of LaGrange to provide instructors for tennis programs in the District. During inclement weather, use may be made of the indoor facility for these classes. The cost of these classes during 1997 was \$50 for 16 lessons over 8 weeks. A representative of the facility has stated that they would be willing to enter into a similar agreement with Countryside and perhaps expand it to include soccer, basketball and volleyball classes.

Soehrman Park

Soehrman Park is a part of the Pleasant Dale Park District. Soehrman Park is located at Willow Springs Road and Hillsdale Road in Countryside. Soehrman park has six acres of land and was recently renovated in 2003. The park contains a playground, sled hill, water play area, drinking fountains, picnic areas, a basketball court, and an in-line roller hockey court.

2.3.4 Open Space System Resource Potential

In order for the City to expand its open space and recreational acreage, it must consider the acquisition of additional land that might be available either now or in the future. During the course of this assignment, the Consultant has worked with the City to identify sites that are either currently being considered for acquisition by the City or those which are currently underutilized and might represent potential additions to the open space system in the City. There are nine other properties that represent significant open space and recreational potential for future City residents to enjoy. These will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

The approximately 2.07 acre **ODM** site is situated just north of the intersection of Joliet Road and East Avenue and has potential for development as small neighborhood park. The site is currently vacant and does have potential to provide a location for expanded Department programs.

There is an approximately 8.4 acre parcel located immediately north of Countryside Plaza. This property has excellent potential for use of part of the site as a mini-park in an area of the City that is currently devoid of mini-parks. The park could be located in the northwest corner of the site with the remainder developed for either commercial or residential use. Access to such a park could be provided via Catherine Avenue.

There is a vacant lot that the City owns adjacent to Countryside Park, on the northwest corner of 61st Street and Kensington Avenue. There is the potential for the development of a recreational facility that could also house the Countryside Playschool.

2.3.5 Existing Educational and Recreational Programs and Facilities

In addition to the existing parks and recreational facilities that are owned and leased by the City of Countryside, the residents of the Community are presented with a variety of educational and recreational programs run by the City. These programs are outlined in detail in the Recreation Departments activity brochures, two of which are produced annually; one for the Summer and Fall programs and one for Winter and Spring and are readily available from the Department. The programs offered are extensive, ranging from art classes to cooking classes. Countryside Playschool represents a valuable resource for City residents and offers pre-school programs for 2 through 4 year olds.

2.4 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

An important element of any comprehensive evaluation of a parks and recreation system is an analysis of how the level of facility provision is keeping pace with trends in the size of the resident population on a geographic distribution basis. This, coupled with an examination of forecasted population change, provides a useful quantitative basis for assessing the existing park acreage provision and future requirements.

Table 3 indicates that based on U.S. Census figures, the City's population has increased from approximately 4,500 in 1970 to an estimated 5,991 (based on 2000 Census figures) at present. Recent figures released by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission indicate that the city can anticipate a modest increase in population over the next twenty years or so to approximately 6,287 by the year 2030. The number of acres of park land in the City has increased over time from zero acres in 1970 to 28.5 acres today (includes 6 acres at Soehrman Park owned and operated by Pleasantdale Park District).

Figure 1 illustrates the effect of population changes and increases the park acreage on the level of provision represented by the number of acres per 1,000 residents in the City. This figure has increased from zero acres per thousand residents in 1970 to approximately 3.76 acres per thousand today. However, this figure represents a drop in a high figure for the City of approximately 4.7 acres achieved in 1990. As the City grows over the Plan period, Table 3 and Figure 1 show how the number of acres per thousand residents will fall marginally to approximately 3.8 acres by 2030.

This analysis has important implications for the City's open space system. As the City population increases, the City will need to provide additional open space to meet the needs of future residents in addition to

increasing the supply for existing residents. Fortunately for Countryside, there are a sufficient number of open space opportunities in the City to make significant improvements in the number of park acres per thousand residents, taking into consideration City population growth. For example, an increase in the park land acreage of just 10 acres (not to mention additional facilities) would increase the supply of park land from the existing 4.2 acres per 1,000 residents to 5.2 acres per thousand by the year 2030. In other terms, this would represent an improvement in the level of supply of over 23 percent.

Table 3: Population Trends, Forecasts and Park Acreage Per 1,000 Population

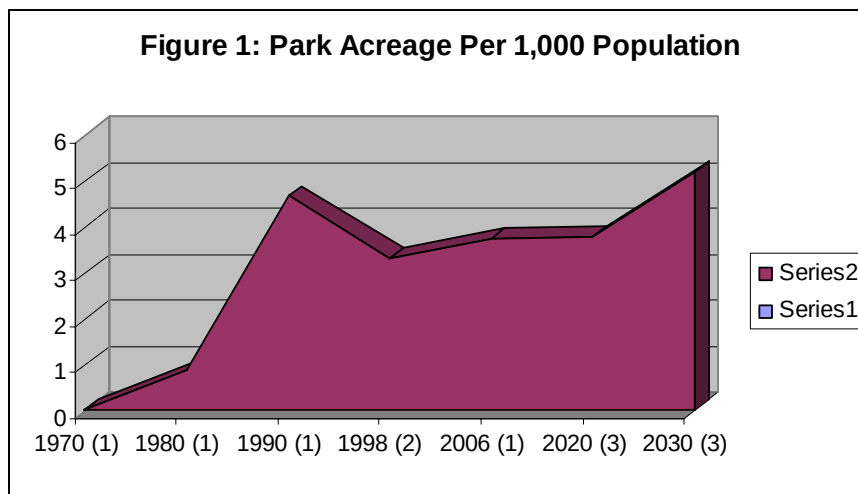
Year	Population	Park Acreage	Acres/1,000 Residents
1970 (1)	4,548	0	0.00
1980 (1)	6,538	5.8	0.89
1990 (1)	5,716	26.7	4.67
1998 (2)	6,500	21.3	3.30
2006 (1)	5,991	22.5	3.75
2020 (3)	7,205	27.3	3.79
2030 (3)	6,287	32.70	5.2

Sources:

(1) US Bureau of the Census

(2) City of Countryside Estimate

(3) Northeastern Illinois Plan Commission Forecast



CHAPTER III - OPEN SPACE STANDARDS AND POLICIES

3.1 DEFINING AN OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

Open space is considered to be a positive, valid and purposeful use of land along with such other uses as residential, commercial, agricultural and industrial. Open space is defined as a land and/or water area which serves the land use function of providing park and recreation opportunities, conserving resources, or structuring the form of urban development. The best known and most widely accepted use of open space is recreation. Open space exists at all levels, ranging from local to regional (county) to national. However, all of these levels while serving individually collectively combine to create what is referred to as an "open space system." The City Recreation Department plays a vital role in establishing an effective and efficient open space system. The primary responsibility of the City is for the acquisition, development and maintenance of the parks and recreation function of open space at the local level.

3.2 THE PURPOSE AND FORM OF OPEN SPACE GOALS AND STANDARDS

3.2.1 Purpose of Goals and Standards

The development of a set of general City parks and recreation goals and a clearly defined set of specific open space standards is central to the success of this Open Space Master Plan. The goals provide global and fundamental planning targets and a benchmark from which the success of individual open space components can be measured. The formulation of open space standards in accordance with the stated goals of the City allow for reasonable relationships to be achieved between the various types of facilities. This in turn presents the potential for the growth and management of a system of recreational opportunity in a balanced and carefully coordinated way.

3.2.2 City Open Space System Goals

The goals that follow are predicated upon the availability of both sufficient funding, additional real estate, and generally accepted standards for a minimum level of park land provision to meet City needs. The City's boundaries and funding levels will change over time and the goals may have to be redefined, and reevaluated. The standards however, presented later in this Chapter, should remain constant. For the City of Countryside Recreation Department to be most effective in meeting the need of its citizens, the various components of the open space system should be located and developed in accordance with a set of desirable standards which relate recreational development to open space goals and needs.

Goals

City open space and recreation system goals should relate to both existing facilities and future facilities as integral components of an overall open space system and are considered to be the basis for the Recreation Department's Mission Statement. The following goals serve as the basis for an evaluation of the existing open space system and in the development and recommendations for the future open space system:

- (a) Provide a system of mini-parks, neighborhood parks and community parks each with facilities appropriate to its area of service and needs of the nearby residents. Identify locations for additional tot lots and smaller parks in some of the underserved residential areas of the City. The City should continue to provide ornamental parks at suitable locations as a valuable element of the parks and recreational system.
- (b) Protect and enhance existing park land, potential recreation areas, ~~and~~ natural scenic areas, and environmentally sensitive areas within the City.
- (c) Ensure that maximum effective use is made of existing parks and recreational facilities, and that both existing and new facilities are developed and maintained to enhance the natural character of the land; to provide visual interest and, to present an attractive appearance to the Community. Monitor local community needs and perceptions and develop new recreational facilities and services that respond to specific desires of City residents.
- (d) Maintain / support a local public park system that maximizes recreational opportunities available within the community. Provide diversified parks and recreational facilities and programs with maximum accessibility and safety for potential users, while maintaining flexibility to meet changing needs and preferences.
- (e) Ensure that the quality of natural areas are maintained and enhanced where possible and, that the recreational, aesthetic and educational potential of natural areas within the City is maximized.

3.2.3 NRPA Park Acreage Standards and Guidelines

In 1983, the National Recreation and Parks Association published a set of Guidelines for park standards against which communities and park districts could assess their own open space systems and plan for the future accordingly. These standards became nationally accepted for determining the appropriate level of provision for some of the different elements that comprise an open space system. In addition to park plans, these standards have been instrumental in ensuring that adequate park land and facilities are provided as a result of new development and property annexations, and have formed the basis of park land donation requirements of numerous municipal subdivision control regulations.

More recently, in December 1995, the NRPA published a new set of guidelines which depart from those of 1983 in that they follow a more scientific and community/park district specific methodology for determining the appropriate level of service for a given geographic area. At its core, this approach relies on a needs assessment and analysis of current supply and demand of existing park facilities which is complex in nature. While the approach is meritorious in many respects, after careful review a number of potential weaknesses emerge. One of these apparent shortcomings is that the approach calls for an extremely detailed examination of the current usage of individual elements of park and open facilities, that, with an open space system the size and complexity of Countryside's, for example, it is simply not a realistic proposition given budget and time constraints of the City.

After careful consideration of the City's unique characteristics and requirements, it was determined that the traditional NRPA approach would be more appropriate, with the inclusion of a detailed needs assessment study incorporating focus group sessions, an adult mail survey and a youth questionnaire. The 1983 NRPA guidelines include park acreage standards against which the existing level of provision can be assessed. These standards are useful because they are based on the ratio of park acres to a given population in a specific planning area.

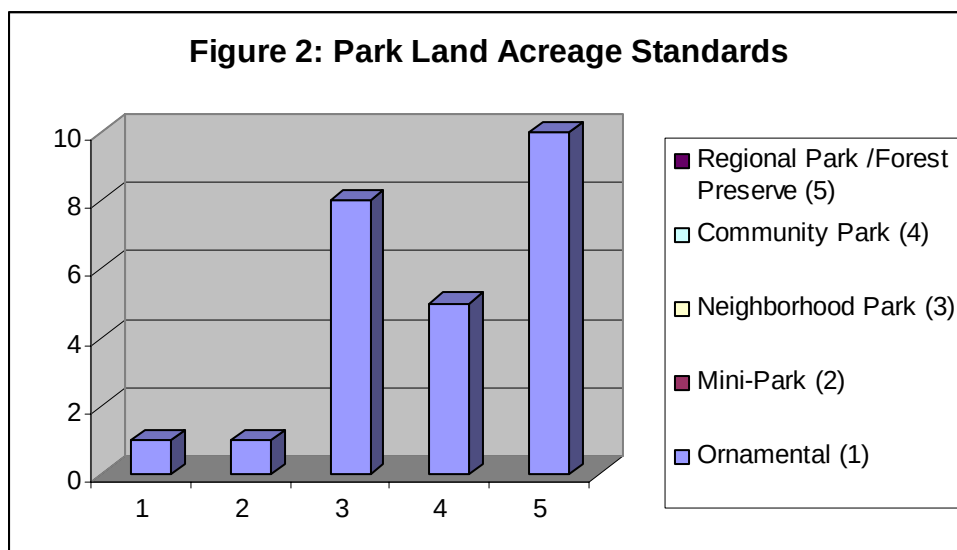
Table 4: Park Land Acreage Standards

Type of Recreation Area	Acres/1,000 Residents*	Size Range in Acres	Population Served	Service Area
Ornamental	1.0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mini-Parks/ Totlots & Playgrounds	1.0	2,500 S.F. - 1.0	500 - 3,000	Sub-neighborhood
Neighborhood	8.0	5.0 - 15.0	3,000 - 5,000	1/2 Mile Radius
Community	5.0	16.0 - 100.0	10,000 - 15,000	1 Mile Radius
Regional/ Forest Preserves	10.0	250.0 +	Distributed throughout Northeastern Illinois within a 1 hour drive time	
Total	25.0	N/A	N/A	N/A

* Optimum size indicated

Sources:

1. "Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines," NRPA - 1983



Overall, the accepted standard is 10 acres per 1,000 population which "applies" only to public recreation areas located within or immediately adjacent to the population centers and does not include parks of regional or State significance, nor does it include purely public school-owned properties. Table 4 and Figure 2 provide a detailed breakdown of the park acreage standards for the various individual open space system elements. It is recommended that the acreage values form the target for the park land acreage in the City of Countryside.

3.2.4 Comparison of Park and Open Space Acreages for Other Illinois Communities and Districts

In order that the City of Countryside Recreation Department can compare the level of open space provision in the City to that in other communities and park districts in close proximity to Countryside, data was gathered on population, acreage and equalized assessed valuation for a number of districts and municipalities. The results of the analysis are depicted in Table 5 and Figure 3.

Acreage Comparison

Each district or community was analyzed in order to determine the quantity of park land owned or leased in relation to the resident population within each area or jurisdiction. In terms of total non-golf owned acreage, Countryside ranked toward the lower end of the scale with its 22.5 acres. Only the Hodgkins Park District fared worse than Countryside with 15.0 acres (Hodgkins Park District and the La Grange Park District's numbers are based on 1998 data). The Pleasant Dale Park District achieved the highest ranking with 136 acres of open space. In terms of acres per 1,000 residents, the ranking of the communities/districts changed slightly for most jurisdictions. However, Countryside again ranked at the lower end with its 3.75 acres per 1,000 City residents. The only park provider fairing worse was the Village of Brookfield with 2.9 acres per 1,000 residents. Pleasantdale Park District ranked highest in this assessment with 12.36 non-golf acres per 1,000.

Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) Comparisons

The equalized assessed valuations per 1,000 residents for the various municipalities and districts were compared the results of which are also shown in Table 5 and Figure 3. The ranking results of this analysis are quite revealing in that Countryside ranks 4th with approximately \$54.7 Million EAV per thousand residents, a figure that is markedly higher than the four communities fairing worse (staff determined this number by dividing the City's current EAV of \$327.9 million by the current population and multiplying that number by 1000). Countryside has an EAV comparable to both Pleasantdale Park District and approximately 75% that of the Village of Hinsdale but one half or fewer the number of acres per thousand residents in both cases (Hodgkins Park District and the La Grange Park District's numbers are based on 1998 data).

Countryside's high EAV per 1,000 residents can largely be attributed to the value of the commercial development in the Community that generates a significant quantity of retail sales tax rebates for the City (1 percent of all sales) from the State. It would therefore appear that the local economy is strong and the City is benefiting from significant revenues from the successes of local businesses, particularly auto-dealerships. Now might be the time to translate the success of these businesses to significant improvements in the City's open space system in general and park and recreation facilities in particular.

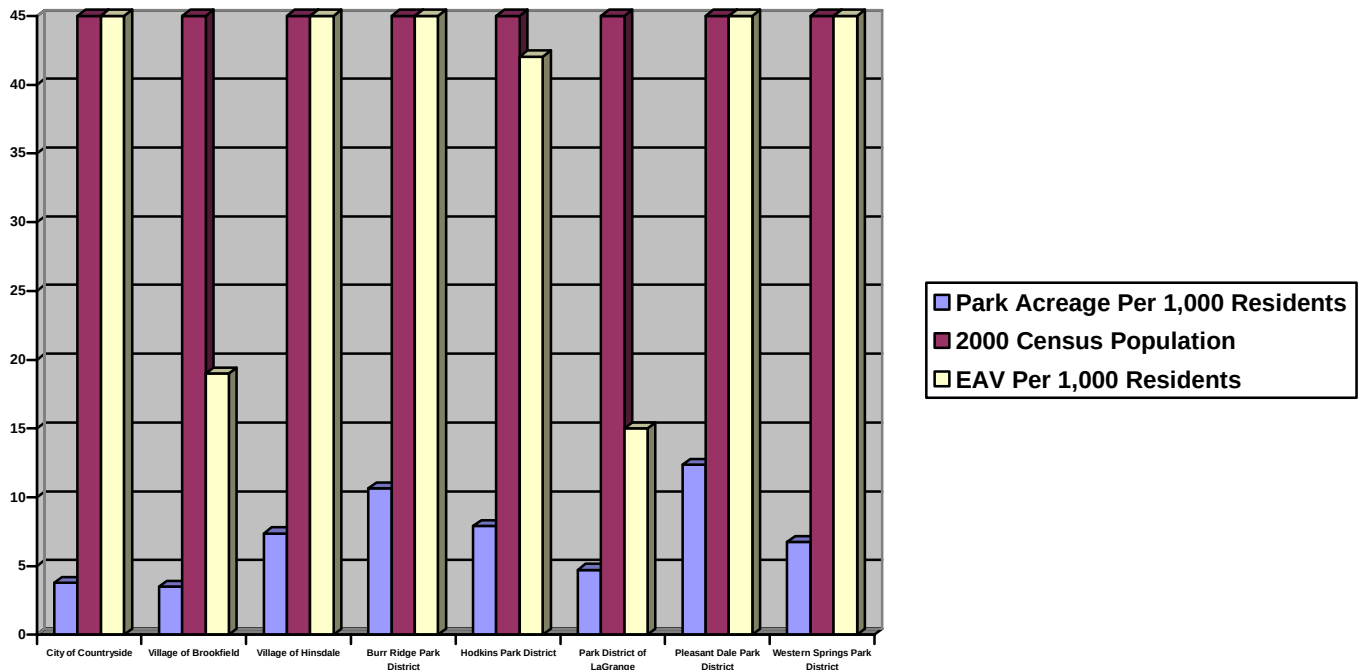
Table 5: Department/District Comparison

Total Park Acres, Park Acres Per 1,000 Residents and Equalized Assessed Valuation Per 1,000 Residents District

Agency	2000 Population	Total Properties	Total Acres	Rank	Total Acres/ 1,000 Residents	Rank	Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV)	EAV / 1,000 Residents	Rank
1. City of Countryside	5,991	9	22.5	7	3.76	7	\$327,987,114	\$54,746,638	4
2. Village of Brookfield	19,085	10	66.6	6	3.49	8	\$370,427,572	\$19,409,356	7
3. Village of Hinsdale	17,940	18	132.5	2	7.38	4	\$1,509,171,813	\$84,123,289	2
4. Burr Ridge Park District	7,400	11	78.6	4	10.62	2	\$692,208,543	\$93,541,695	1
5. Hodgkins Park District*	2,134	3	15.0	8	7.9	3	\$81,486,290	\$42,887,521	6
6. Park District of La Grange*	15,608	11	71.0	5	4.7	6	\$237,531,639	\$15,835,443	8
7. Pleasant Dale Park District	11,000	8	136	1	12.36	1	\$608,074,834	\$55,279,530	3
8. Western Springs Park District	12,493	11	84	3	6.72	5	\$577,275,000	\$46,207,876	5

* 1998 Data

Figure 3: Department/District Comparison



CHAPTER IV - PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Open Space Master Plan for the City of Countryside includes a variety of recommendations that have been specifically tailored to meet the existing and future needs of the community to the year 2023. The Plan recommendations for the City are summarized on Map 4 - Open Space Master Plan. This plan is truly a "Plan for Countryside" that has been developed as a result of extensive detailed analysis and participation by citizens, interested groups and organizations as presented in the preceding chapters. Section 4.2 following pertains to the establishment of outdoor recreational facility standards for the City. Section 4.3 presents design criteria for the different park classifications such as neighborhood and community parks, including illustrations of prototype parks. Section 4.4 outlines the various recommended improvements to existing parks and recreational facilities (including trails), while Section 4.5 relates to proposals for new parks and facilities.

4.2 RECOMMENDED PARK FACILITY STANDARDS

Earlier, during Chapter III of this report, standards were introduced for park acreage per 1,000 City residents by park category (Mini, neighborhood, etc.). While these standards are useful in providing standards for the provision of open space and recreational opportunity, they do not provide the City with planning standards for the recreational facility and equipment requirements within them. Since such requirements will constitute an important element of the Capital Improvement Program to be developed in the following Chapter, these should be established now.

The preceding analyses in this Plan, including the needs assessment, have been instrumental in developing a very clear picture of the existing supply of and resident desire for specific facilities and activities. This Plan is primarily concerned with the provision of specific recreational opportunities that will meet the needs and desires of existing and future residents, and, therefore, the system should be specifically tailored to this end. Table 6 (over) sets out the recommended standards for selected outdoor recreational activities. This Table has as its foundation the standards for such facilities as prescribed by the NRPA. The National Recreation and Park Association standards have, however, been modified to reflect the unique characteristics of the Countryside recreational system and stated desires of its residents.

These standards, coupled with the park acreage standards, provide a basis for all subsequent recommendations. The facility standards will be important in determining the required improvements to existing parks and open space areas as well as providing a guide for the types of facilities that might be included in new parks. It is important for the health of the open space and recreation system in the City of Countryside that the spirit, if not the letter, of these recommendations are followed over the life of this planning instrument.

4.3 RECOMMENDED PARK CLASSIFICATION DESIGN GUIDELINES

Introduction

The purpose of this section of the Plan is to establish design criteria for each of the different park classifications in the City's park and recreation system. These guidelines are presented graphically as illustrations for prototype park facilities for the park and recreational facility categories that are of central

Table 6: Recommended Standards for Selected Outdoor Recreational Facilities

Facility	Min. Standard/ 1,000 Population	Min. Standard for Countryside	Existing City Provision	Remarks
Ball Diamonds Baseball & Softball	1/2,500	4	5	None Required
Courts Tennis Basketball Volleyball	1/2,500 1/3,000 1/2,500	4 3 4	4 5 0	Need volleyball
Golf Course	1/25,000	0	1	None Required
Gymnasium Incl. Multi-Purpose Courts, Basketball, Stage, Batting Cages	1/10,000	1	0	Gymnasium Facilities are required
Ice Skating Indoors	1/30,000	0	0	None required
In-Line Skating/Skateboard Outdoors	1/20,000	0	2	Countryside Park has in- line hockey rinks and skateboard park
Picnic Areas	1/2,000	4	0	Forest Preserve Areas But Explore Potential
Playfields Soccer and Football	1/5,000	2	3	Improve Existing
Playgrounds	1/2,500	4	7 6	Improve Existing
Pools 25 Meter 50 Meter Diving Wading Water Park	1/20,000 1/40,000 1/40,000 1/10,000 1/40,000	0 0 0 1 0	0 0 0 0 0	Consider wading pool
Recreation Center Incl. Fitness Center Leisure Center Community and Multi- Purpose Room	1/20,000	0	0	Consider facility
Sledding Hill	1/20,000	0	0	Consider facility
Trails Bike/Jogging System	I/Region	1	0	Add trail linkages

Thompson Dyke & Associates, Ltd. - March 1998

Source: NRPA & Thompson Dyke and Associates, Ltd.

importance to the park and recreation system: mini/tot-lot, neighborhood, community and trail. Design guidelines for the other park and recreational facility classifications, such as ornamental parks, are described in the text. It should be noted that the following are only guidelines and should not be taken to represent blueprints for park design but, rather, assist the City in establishing minimum design requirements for the various park and recreational facility classifications.

Ornamental Parks

As previously stated, ornamental parks are important in an urban environment because they assist in breaking-up the built environment and can significantly contribute to the aesthetics and beautification of the street scene. They also serve as passive recreation areas, for example, a lunch time picnic location. The actual design and form that an ornamental park can take can vary enormously but there are a number of basic features that can be incorporated in the design of an ornamental park. These may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

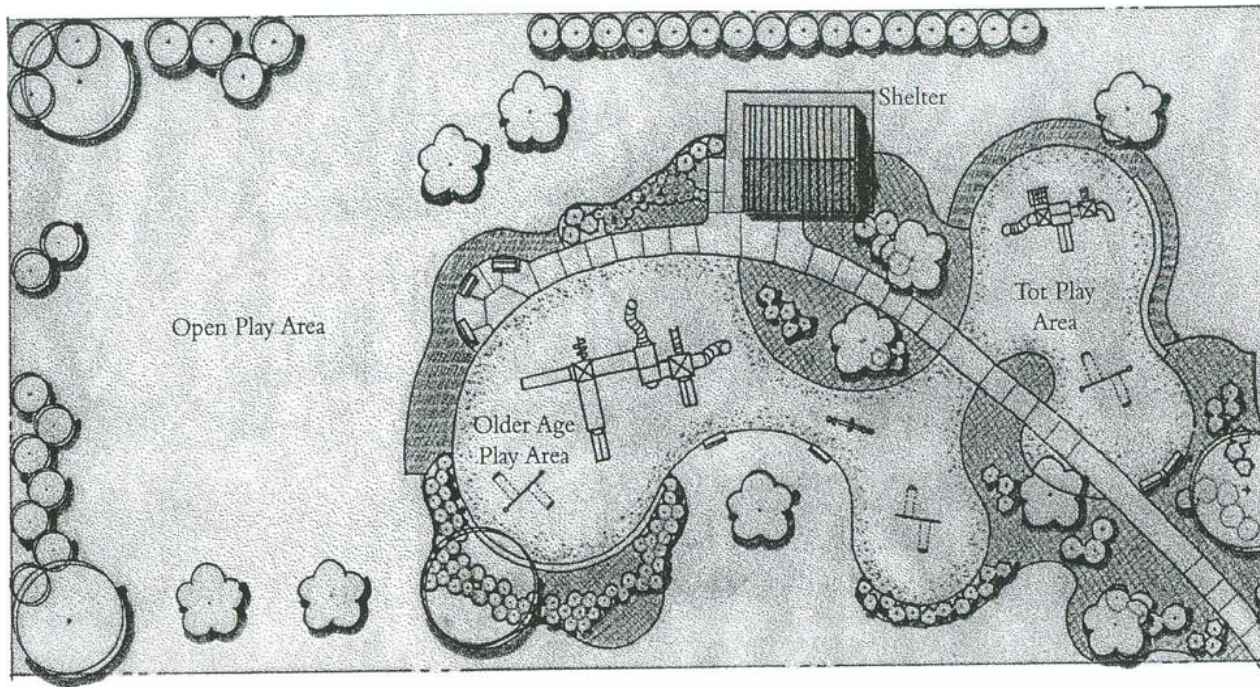
- An attractive variety of landscaping;
- Seating areas;
- Architectural features such as monuments;
- Water features including small ponds and fountains;
- Decorative Paving
- Drinking fountains;
- Pergolas and decorative fencing; and, Gazebos.

Mini-Parks

The primary purpose of a mini-park is to serve the recreational needs of small children that fall within a 1/4 mile radius of their homes which can be significantly reduced by the existence of pedestrian barriers such as major roads. While the main design element requirements of a mini-park can be incorporated into a neighborhood or even a community park, when provided as a stand alone park facility, such parks usually fall between 1/2 and 1 acre in size. Figure 5 - Prototype Mini-Park - represents a sketch that illustrates the desired design and minimum recreational elements of a typical mini-park,

While the actual design could obviously differ from this generalized illustration, one would anticipate the following features in every mini-park:

- An identification sign including the name of the park and the "City of Countryside Recreation Department" at each entry or prominent location;
- A clearly defined park boundary demarcated by a fence, landscaping, boundary markers or a combination thereof;
- Play equipment for children aged 2-12 that is Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant in an area a minimum of 5,500 square feet in size;
- Seating areas in both sun and shade; and,
- Attractive landscaping;
- Barrier free and accessible entrance points.



Prototype Mini Park

Open Space Master Plan

Neighborhood Park

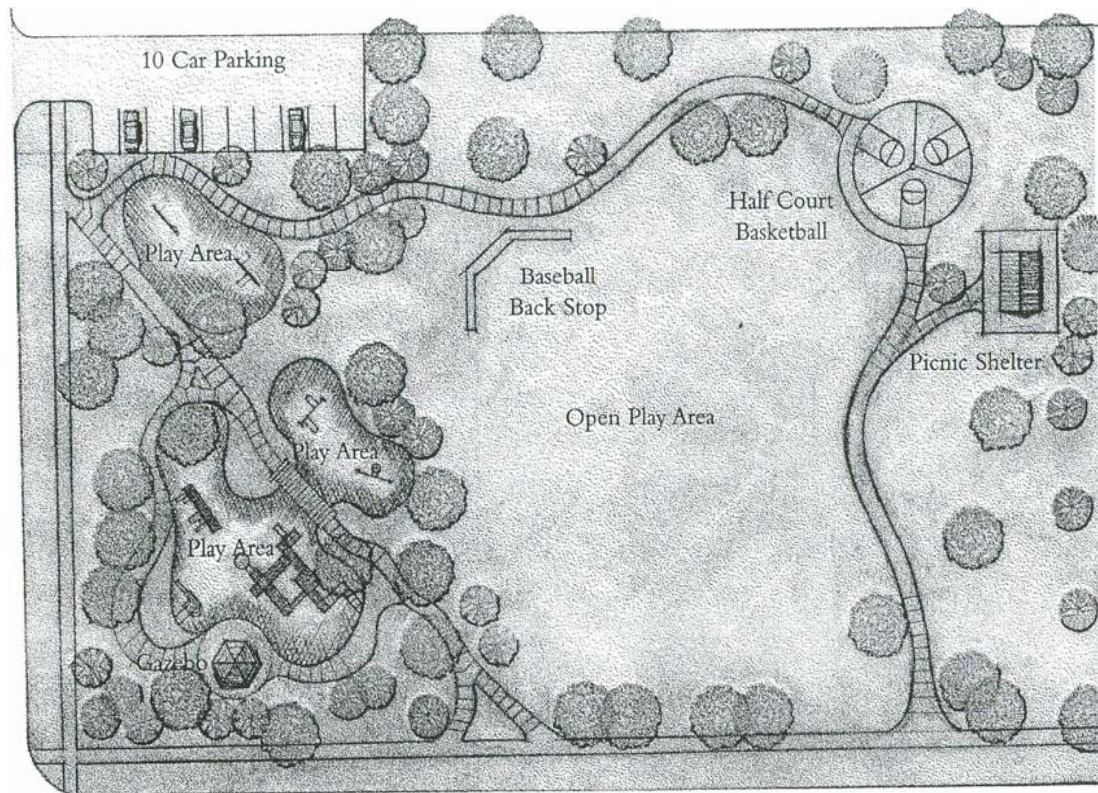
An important element in any parks and recreational system, neighborhood parks as the name suggests serve as the focal recreational area for specific community localities such as an individual subdivision. As established in Chapter II, these parks have a service area radius of 1/2 mile which is also reduced by the existence of barriers to the movement of the elderly and small children. Neighborhood parks should have a minimum size of 5 acres ranging up to approximately 15 acres. While the actual design could obviously differ from park to park, one would anticipate the following features in every neighborhood park:

- An identification sign including the name of the park and the "City of Countryside Recreation Department" at each entry or prominent location;
- A clearly defined park boundary demarcated by a fence, landscaping, boundary markers or a combination thereof;
- Play equipment for children aged 2-12 that is CPSC and ADA compliant in an area a minimum of 7,500 square feet in size;
- Seating areas in both sun and shade;
- A picnic shelter;
- 2 tennis courts;
- A drinking fountain;
- A picnic area;
- A large open informal playing field a minimum of 2 acres in size, including a backstop and goals; and,
- A modest size parking lot (approximately 10 to 20 parking spaces);
- Barrier free and accessible entrance points.

Community Park

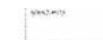
These parks should typically have a size range of between 16 and 100 acres and have a service area of approximately 1 mile. Due to the large service area, it is anticipated that many users will visit these parks via vehicular transport. The service area is not, therefore, restricted by the existence of pedestrian barriers. Figure 7 - Prototype Community Park (over) provides an example of the form that a community park might take. While the actual design could obviously differ from this generalized illustration, one would anticipate the following features in every community park:

- An identification sign including the name of the park and the "City of Countryside Recreation Department" at each entry or prominent location;
- A clearly defined park boundary demarcated by a fence, landscaping, boundary markers or a combination thereof;
- Play equipment for children aged 2-12 that is CPSC and ADA compliant in an area a minimum of 9,500 square feet in size;
- Several drinking fountains;
- A picnic shelter and associated area with outdoor grills;
- A large formal playing field area a minimum of 7 acres in size;
- A parking lot(s) capable of accommodating at least 50 cars; and,
- Connections to and, where appropriate, the incorporation of trails throughout the park.
- Barrier free and accessible entrance points.



Prototype Neighborhood Park

Open Space Master Plan



Trails and Associated Open Space

Recommendations are presented later in this Plan for significant trail development. Its recreation value to City residents will be beyond question and it is expected to represent a major focus of the Recreation Department well into the future. There is a need for non-motorized trails and sidewalks to connect various areas of the City. Future trail design should include:

- Several identification signs including the name of the park and the "City of Countryside Recreation Department" location at key entrances and prominent locations;
- The system should be designed in such a way that provides connections to parks, other recreation facilities, and various commercial areas of the City;
- Paved with asphalt or concrete;
- Clear of debris, branches, limbs and trees;
- Where possible, separated from roadways by a buffer or curb;
- Make use of over or under road crossings where feasible; and,
- Easily accessible for a wide variety of potential users.

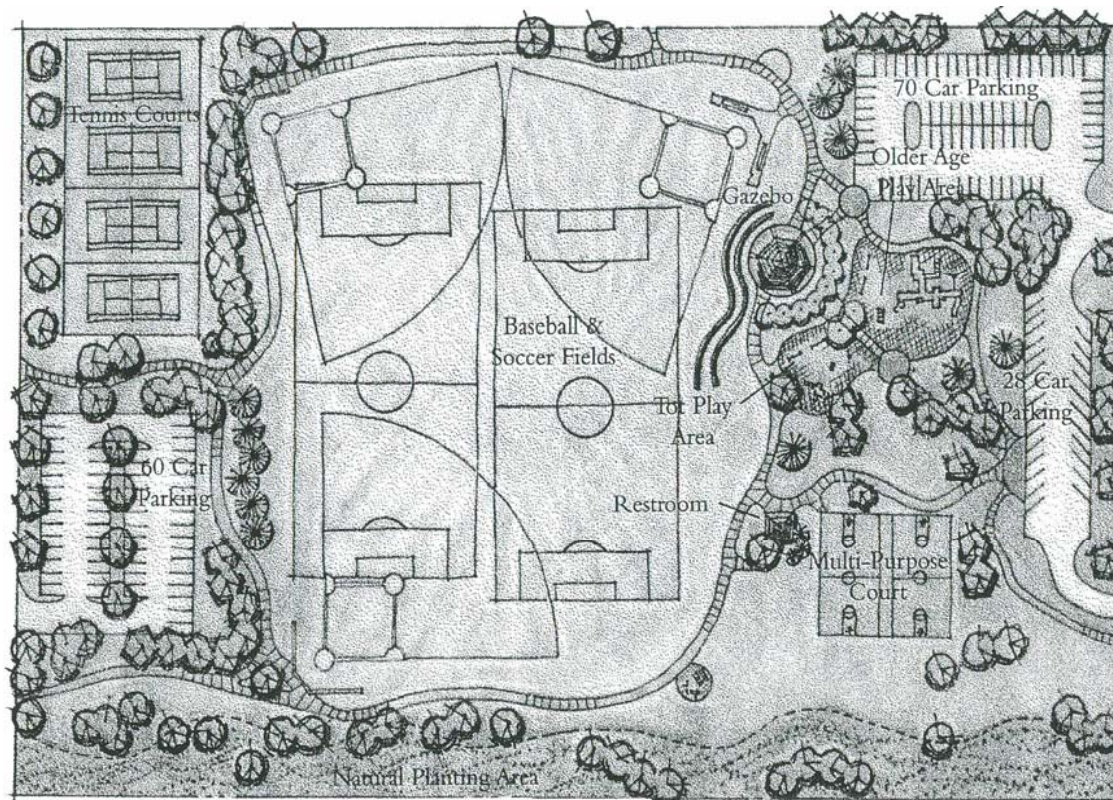
4.4 RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

As previously stated, in the process of preparing this Plan, the consultant visited every park and conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the various facilities at each (Tables 1 & 2). The quantitative analysis enabled a clear picture to be developed of the level of provision of facilities in each park and where additional facilities could be provided. The qualitative assessment focused on the general condition and age of equipment, whether or not the facilities and equipment conform to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) standards, and the recreational value of the equipment and facilities.

Based upon the overview and analysis of existing facilities, recommendations are proposed for the existing parks in the City's recreational system. Please note as a general recommendation, every park and or facility should be accessible for all persons while encouraging physical, intellectual and social development for all. Furthermore, all parks, as a general rule, should have clearly marked boundaries and an identification sign with the words "City of Countryside Recreation Department" appearing conspicuously on the sign.

Brancatto Park (MP) 0.3 Acres

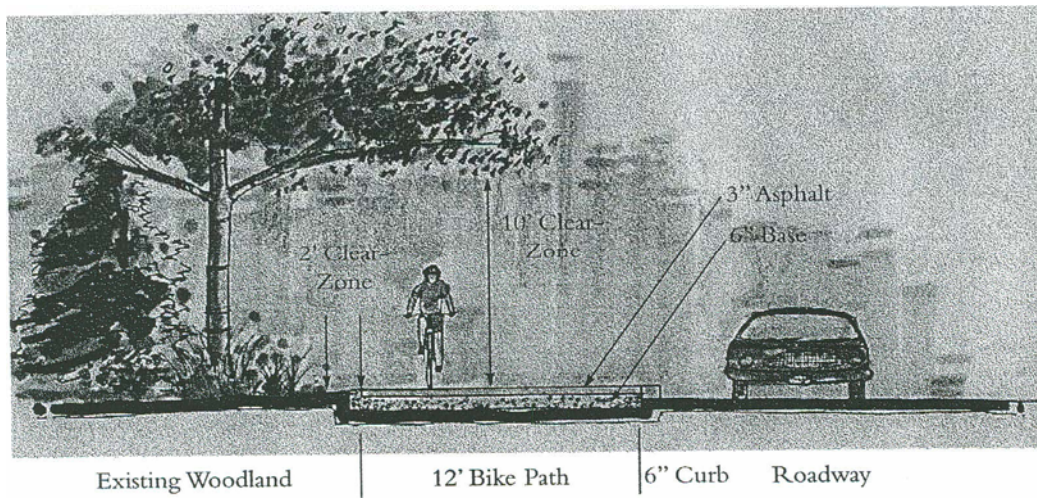
This play lot contains older play equipment, which needs to be upgraded. The "horse" swings are completely metal, have sharp edges and pinch points, and while probably popular with children, they most likely do not meet the current CPSC guidelines. The sand play surface meets CPSC standards but does not meet ADA requirements. It is therefore recommended that the play equipment be replaced with CPSC compliant facilities and the surface be replaced with an ADA accessible one such as Fibar. The fence around the park is in reasonably good condition, but needs to be repainted, along with the fence posts and benches. However, there is not a gate or some type of "deterrent" to keep small children from running out of the park and possibly into the street. The slide bracket is rusted and should be inspected for integrity and be repainted. There are a number of timbers around the play area that are rotted and should be replaced. It is further recommended that the vegetation in the park be enhanced with appropriate plantings, and, benches, picnic table(s) and waste receptacles also be installed. The unimproved portion of the alley R.O.W. immediately north of the park could be vacated to allow for the expansion of the park northward.



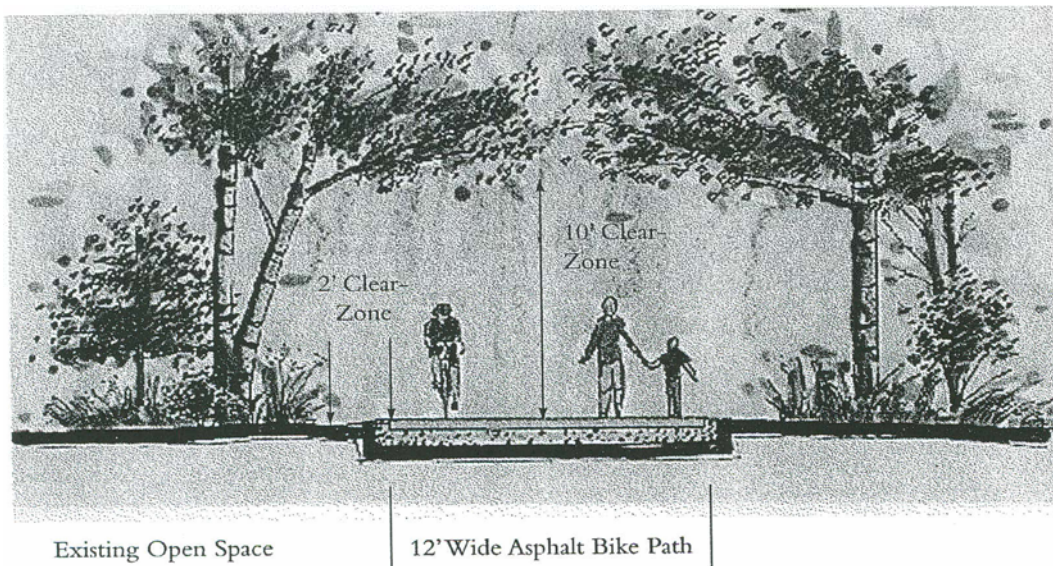
Prototype Community Park

Open Space Master Plan

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Typical Roadside Trail Section



Typical Trail Section

Prototype Trails

Open Space Master Plan

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RPT No. 10-10-10-10-10 10-10-10-10-10-10-10 10-10-10-10-10-10-10	Telephone: 847-272-6293 E-mail: info@open-space.org Fax: 847-272-1071
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City Park (NP) 3.7 Acres

Significant improvements have been made since the original Plan was approved in 1998. The park now has a well developed Little League field, soccer field, benches and a drinking fountain. The issues related to the geese that are attracted to the park also needs to be addressed. One approach would be to plant taller grasses and shrubs around the perimeter of the park. This has the effect of creating the deception of the potential for predators such as foxes. Landscaping within the park should generally be enhanced with additional plantings particularly along the southern the northern and eastern boundaries. Other recommended improvements include an entry feature for the Park.

Countryside Playschool (MP) 0.3 Acres

While the play structure is in good condition and appears to meet current CPSC guidelines, the sand surface is not ADA accessible and should be replaced with one that is accessible such as Fibar. The City obtained the property of the former United Auto Workers Union building site in 2001. This area is being considered as part of the City Hall's space needs analysis, which may lead to additional Recreation areas as a part of the City Hall development.

Countryside Park (CP) 11.2 Acres

Recent renovations to this park have made the park a very attractive site. There are two softball diamonds, a soccer field, playground equipment, lighted tennis courts, sand volley ball courts, a skate park, an inline hockey rink, lighted walking paths, and two gazebos.



Recent renovations to Countryside Park have made this park a very attractive site.

Holland's Park (MP) 0.3 Acres

The play equipment should be replaced by equipment that meets current CPSC guidelines, the “horse swings” and the “spring ride on animals” are old and need to be replaced with up to date equipment and the sand surface should be replaced by an ADA accessible one such as Fibar. However, this park floods during heavy rain storms, so an alternative ADA acceptable surface would need to be installed. Additional landscaping throughout the park would do much to improve its aesthetic appeal. This park is not “barrier free,” and also needs a new fence that would have some type of “deterrent” to keep small children from running out of the park and possibly into the street. Benches have been replaced, and a picnic table was also installed. Waste receptacles and a drinking fountain should also be installed.

Ideal School Park (NP) 5 Acres

The City should solidify the current informal use agreement with School District #105 by entering into a long-term lease or formal use agreement with the District for a minimum of 10 years and preferably 15 years. Any trail development in the Community should provide a connection to the School. The fence around the tennis courts is in need of replacement, the tennis courts are missing one of the nets. The net has not been replaced, because other nets have been stolen from the site. Staff should evaluate the need and the demand for the tennis courts at this site. If it is determined that tennis courts are needed on this site, the court surface should be resurfaced. The light poles adjacent to the basketball and tennis courts are painted with metallic paint, but only on their bottom half. The top half appears to be painted with red oxide primer, which contains lead, and should be avoided in play areas. The chain link fence, including gates and signage around the tennis court is in poor condition and represents a hazardous condition. A tennis court bench is missing a slat and the other benches need to be painted. The play area surface depths and drop zones should be evaluated; some timbers around the play area are deteriorated and should be replaced. The northeast access to the play area is very muddy. Consideration should be given to the installation to a sidewalk or similar surface. Additional landscaping should be installed in the park to improve its aesthetic quality and to soften the visual impact of surrounding uses.

Srjema-Michalek Park (MP) 0.5 Acres

The play equipment should be replaced by that capable of meeting current CPSC guidelines. Landscaping around the perimeter and within the park should be enhanced and additional seating provided. Other improvements should also include waste receptacles, additional landscaping, which could include improving the appearance and handicapped (barrier free) access to the park. The safety bollards around the park are rotting and in need of replacement, and the basketball court needs to be repaired. The wood timbers surrounding the play area have been replaced with plastic “timbers”. This park lacks a fence on the west and north sides; a fence is needed in order to prevent small children from running into traffic on adjacent streets. This park features the “horse” swings identified in other parks. There was felt underlayment in the play area which was exposed that suggested that there is inadequate play surface area material depth. The basketball court surface is in need of sealing.

Memorial Park (OP) 0.9 Acres

Memorial Park, located on a triangular piece of property at the intersection of 55th Street and Plainfield Road was built during the City of Countryside's 40th anniversary celebration in 2000. Once a dilapidated section of the community, the City of Countryside purchased the land and redeveloped it into a community focal point. Constructed in memory of those who served in the U.S. military, the park is the location of the City's clock tower and carillon.

Woodland Ridge (MP) 0.9 Acres

Woodland Ridge is a newly created Mini Park located in the Woodland Ridge subdivision. The play lot contains newer equipment, which should meet the CPSC guidelines. The felt underlayment in the play area is exposed, which suggests that there is an inadequate material depth. Brick pavers were installed in the parkway to address the chronic mud problem. There is a masonry wall that spans the park from the eastern to western boundaries; this could be a fall hazard however. There is not a well-defined boundary on the south end, and there are also concerns with erosion. The back slope area should be planted in shrubs or bushes as the fall hazard area exceeds 30 inches. Such plantings will deter access to the area and minimize the fall hazard. The property line at the south end of the park should be more fully established, and steps taken to eliminate erosion.

4.5 RECOMMENDED NEW PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Introduction

In order to meet the existing and future needs of the residents of the City of Countryside, significant additions to the publicly owned park land acreage will be required over the Plan period. It has been noted that the level of park provision in the City falls well below accepted minimum standards to adequately provide for recreational opportunities for Community residents. The following section provides details of suggested new parks and recreational facilities.

Recommendations

Trail Development

As previously noted, at present, the City does not have a trail facility. A major recommendation of this Plan is for the City to actively pursue the development of a trail linking Ideal School with the Arie Crown Forest Preserve via Ideal and Countryside Park. Furthermore, it is recommended that the City develop a section of trail north to the triangle area between 55th and Plainfield to provide these residents with access to both Countryside Park and the Forest Preserve and hence significantly enhance residents' access to the City's recreation system. It is also recommended that when the City pursues trail development, to look into developing non-motorized trails and sidewalks to connect various commercial areas of the City

It is recommended that the trail be developed in four phases. Phase I (approximately 1.1 miles) would provide for the development of a trail section along the north side of Plainfield Road between Peck Avenue at the western end of the Triangle area and the Intersection of Brainard and Plainfield, then south along the east side of Brainard to 61st Street. This section will assist in the integration of the Triangle area residents with the

recreational system of the City, particularly Finn Park. Examination of aerial photographs for the City suggests that there is adequate space within the public right-of-way on both Brainard and Plainfield (there is an existing sidewalk) to develop a R.O.W. type trail as depicted in Figure 7 - Prototype Trail.

Phase II of trail development would be between Countryside Park and the Arie Crown Forest Preserve. Phase III would be constructed from Countryside Park along the north side of 61st Street to City Park, then north along the buffer strip to the west of Countryside Plaza, then east to LaGrange Road to the existing stoplight, then east to Ideal School. Phase IV would generally include the commercial area from La Grange Road to the east, 55th Street on the north, Joliet Road on the South and Brainard Avenue on the west. This link, which essentially is in the center of the City would provide residents access to both shopping and parks.

There is a vacant parcel immediately north of the Plaza that could accommodate an easement for the trail along its southern boundary. The City may wish to conduct a study in the future to explore the potential for connecting the new trail system to the Golf Course.

Former United Auto Workers Union Building - Community Center/Civic Center

This site, which was home to the United Auto Workers Union Building, was acquired by the City in 2001. The building no longer exists and there is vacant land directly to the north of City Hall. This site is being considered as part of a City Hall space needs analysis which may lead to new City office facilities. This is estimated to occur sometime in 2007 – 2009. As previously mentioned, this site could house a Community and / or Civic Center.



The vacant site of the former United Auto Workers Building is being considered as part of a City Hall space needs analysis.

ODM Site, East Avenue - Neighborhood Park

This 2.07 acre site should be acquired by the City for the establishment of a neighborhood park to provide for the expansion of the City's sports activity programs and a much needed additional neighborhood facility in the Community.

Property North of Countryside Plaza - Mini-Park and Trail Easement

When this property is developed or, following City acquisition of a minimum of 1 acre of the approximately 8.4 acre total site area, a mini-park should be provided in the northwest corner of the parcel accessed via Catherine Avenue. The City should seek to secure an easement for the development of a trail section along the southern boundary of the property. An easement should be sought for the development of a trail segment along the southern boundary of the property.

1211 55th Street and 5550 Edgewood – Triangle Area - Mini-Park

The City should pursue acquisition of at least one and preferably two residential lots as they become available in the Triangle area for development as a mini-park. There are .43 acres of land available at 1211 55th Street, and .46 acres available adjacent to that property at 5550 Edgewood Avenue. This area of the City was identified in the 1998 plan as an area that lacked a mini-park. The residents who live in this area are isolated by pedestrian barriers in the form of Plainfield Road, 55th Street and Willow Springs Road. Staff identified a .43 acre lot on 55th street, and a .46 acre lot adjacent to that lot on the corner of Edgewood Avenue and 55th Street that could potentially be used as a mini-park.

5435 S. Spring Street – Mini Park

This vacant .24 acre lot is located on Spring Street just north of 55th Street. This vacant lot could be developed into a mini-park that would serve the residents in the areas of Spring Street, 55th Street, La Grange Road, and 53rd Street.

6 6th Avenue – Ornamental Park

This vacant .15 acre site is located on the south east corner of 6th Avenue and Plainfield Road. The development of an ornamental park in this area should include sophisticated landscaping and a seating area, because there are a variety of restaurants just west of this site.

59th and Kensington Avenue – Mini Park

The approximately .37 acre parcel located on the east side of Kensington Avenue at 59th Street could be developed into a mini-park and the City might want to consider trail development at this site. A trail could connect this parcel to City Park, located just south of this site, Countryside Plaza, which is directly east of the site and the vacant property just north of Countryside Plaza which is mentioned in this Plan as a site for possible future development.

7334 Maridon – Mini Park

There is a vacant .34 acre parcel located at 7334 Maridon, just south of the 5th Avenue Cutoff. The City began annexing properties in this area in 2000. The remainder of the 5th Avenue Cutoff neighborhood was annexed into the City in the fall of 2003 and the spring of 2004. The area, just south of I-294 has one mini-park, Woodland Ridge that is 0.9 acres. This area would benefit from another mini-park or a tot lot.

4.6 OTHER PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

Individual Park Master Plans

The City should prepare individual park master plans where either substantial improvement to existing facilities have been recommended or new parks are proposed.

Score Tennis & Fitness Center

The City should actively explore the recreational potential of a public-private partnership with the Score Tennis & Fitness Center located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Joliet Road and Willow Springs Road. As outlined during Chapter II, recently, the operators of this indoor facility have diversified to offer a broader range of activities including soccer, volleyball and indoor golf lessons. There is the potential for a cooperative venture with the Department, particularly in relation to teen programs and activities, which some residents feel are lacking in the City.

As also previously discussed, the Score Tennis & Fitness Center currently has an agreement with the Park District of LaGrange to provide instructors for tennis programs in the District on Park District properties during the summer months for modest fees. A representative of the facility has also stated that they would be willing to enter into a similar agreement with Countryside and perhaps expand it to include soccer, basketball and volleyball classes.

The City should examine the potential of such opportunities since they could significantly contribute to the recreational opportunities open to Community residents.

4.7 THE EFFECT OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations included in the preceding Sections have been designed to ensure adequate levels of recreational opportunity for both existing and future residents. The earlier Plan analyses revealed a fundamental deficiency in both the overall provision of City open space and park acreage and an inequitable distribution of such park land across the City. The inventory and evaluation revealed a need to upgrade existing facilities and provide additional facility elements to more closely reflect nationally accepted standards and those tailored to reflect the specific characteristics of the City.

The most important effect of the recommended Plan is to increase the current level of City-wide non-golf park land provision from the existing 22.5 acres of park land to approximately 40 acres by 2023, an increase of over 43 percent. This in turn improves the acreage per 1,000 residents from the current 4.2 acres per 1,000 residents to approximately 5.4 acres per 1,000 residents. The Plan would also result in a total of approximately 2.7 miles of trail being created and representing an excellent potential recreational resource for future residents. The situation could be improved further with the addition of potential open space and parks

as redevelopment opportunities are presented to the City. In time, it may be possible for the City to further close on the goal of achieving the NRPA national standard minimum of 10 acres per 1,000 City residents.

The Plan recommendations, if followed, will also have the important effect of improving the quality of recreational facilities in the City and to significantly enhance their recreational value to City residents. This is important because the City cannot meet the minimum park acreage standard at present due to the fact that it is largely built-out and the opportunities for enough new parks simply do not exist. It is therefore critical that the City follows the recommendations of this Plan and maximizes the recreational potential of its existing parks and facilities.

Table 7: Open Space Master Plan: 2006-2023

Parks and Facilities	Type	School District (If Applicable)	Ownership/ Tenure	Size (Acres)	Length (Miles)
Existing:					
Brancato Park	MP	#105	City Owned	0.3	
City Park	NP		City Owned	3.7	
Countryside Playschool	MP		City Owned	0.3	
Countryside Park	CP		City Owned	11.2	
Hollands Park	MP		City Owned	0.3	
Ideal School	NP		Lease 10-15 Years	5.0	
Memorial Park	OP		City Owned	0.9	
Srejma-Michalek	MP		City Owned	0.5	
Flagg Creek Golf	GC		City/Park District	67.0	
Soerhman Park	NP		Park District	6.0	
Woodland Ridge	MP		City Owned	0.3	
Sub-total				95.5	0
Sub-total (Non-Golf)				28.5	
Recommended Additions to Open Space System:					
Former United Auto Workers Union	CC		City Owned	2.5	
ODM Property	NP		City Owned	2.07	
North of Countryside	MP		City Owned	1.0	
Triangle Area	MP		City Owned	0.5	
Ideal School to Finn Park Trail Segment					
Via City Park	T		City Owned		0.6
Countryside Park Trail	T		City Owned		0.5
Countryside Park to Forest Preserve Trail	T		City Owned		0.5
61st Street north on Brainard to & West on Plainfield to Peck	T		City Owned		1.1
1211 55 th Street	MP			.43	
5550 Edgewood	MP			.46	
5435 South Spring Street	MP			.24	
6 6 th Avenue	OP			.15	
59 th and Kensington	MP			.37	
7334 Maridon	MP			.34	
Sub-total				8.06	0
Total Park & Open Space				103.56	
Total Non-Golf Park & Open Space				36.56	
Total Trail					27

MP = Mini Park, NP = Neighborhood Park, CP = Community Park, CC = Community Center, T = Trail

CHAPTER V - IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous Chapter of this report detailed an extensive number and variety of specific recommendations for the City of Countryside's parks and recreation system. To be meaningful, such recommendations must be supported by a mechanism for implementing them. The purpose of this Chapter is to lay down a framework for the City on how such recommendations can manifest themselves with physical expression on the ground. To this end, this Chapter provides a general analysis of the current financial condition of the Recreation Department. It contains an analysis of Departmental budgets for the years leading up to the preparation of this Plan and, a section on priorities for the City to assist in the determination of the most important improvements and additions to the system over the next ten years. Various opportunities that the City might take advantage of for financing the recommendations of the Plan are also presented. The following recommendations and suggestions for the implementation of the Master Plan can ensure that the City of Countryside will continue to meet the recreational needs of its citizens for years to come.

5.2 FINANCIAL CONDITION

The City of Countryside

When this plan was originally adopted, the analysis of the budgets for the City for fiscal years 1996/97 and 1997/8 and the preliminary budget for 1998/9, coupled with the analysis of the State sales tax returns for the City over the same period, the financial condition of the community was sound. The total City budget increased from \$4.5 million in 1996/97 to approximately \$8.5 million for the 1997/8 fiscal year. Assuming zero or minimal population growth over the two year period, the City budget per capita nearly doubled, increasing from \$692 per capita in 1996/97 to approximately \$1,308 per person in 1997. In reviewing the current City budget for fiscal years 2004-05 and 2005-06, the City is in good financial condition. City revenues have increased from \$7,309,845 in fiscal year 2004-05 to \$7,934,665 in fiscal year 2005-26 to approximately \$8,749,150 for the 2006-07 fiscal year. The total City budget expenditures for fiscal year 2006-07 are \$8,745,605.

Based on the analysis, it would appear that one of the main funding sources for the increase in City expenditures per head of population has been the significant rise in City sales tax revenues. Total sales tax revenues for the City for the fiscal period of July 1, 1996 through June 30, 1997 were \$4.8 million. This translates to approximately \$736 per capita. Such fiscal indications are important because strong retail tax revenues help to lessen the tax burden on local residents to pay for City services such as the Recreation Department and the facilities it operates. Sales tax revenues continue to benefit the City, with 2004-05 sales tax revenues at \$5,484,271, 2005-06 sales tax revenues at \$6,039,147, and 2006-07 sales tax revenues projected at \$6,800,000.

The Recreation Department

Not surprisingly, the healthy financial picture for the City as whole has been reflected by a similarly positive fiscal analysis for the Recreation Department. When this plan was adopted in 1998, the total Departmental expenditures had increased from approximately \$281,150 for the 1996/7 fiscal year to \$331,465 for the 1997/8 fiscal year. This translated to an increase in Departmental expenditure per capita of \$43 in 1996/7 to \$51 per capita for 1997/8. The Recreation Department revenues have remained consistent, with revenues at \$189,304 for fiscal year 2004-05, \$222,005 for fiscal year 2005-06 and \$194,975 projected for fiscal year 2006-07. Expenses for the Recreation Department have also remained consistent, with expenses at \$256,846 for fiscal year 2004-05, \$275,584 for fiscal year 2005-06, and expenses projected at \$314,065 for fiscal year 2006-07. While such an increase is commendable, it should be stressed that the figures are low in comparison to communities with similarly good commercial sales bases.

Conclusion

Budgets for the Recreation Department will continue to vary from year to year but at present, both the City and the Recreation Department appear to be in favorable financial condition. This should enable the City to take adequate steps to ensure that the Department improves and expands its physical assets in order to provide the desired level of recreational opportunity for Countryside's citizens.

5.3 IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE

There are a number of important steps that the City should take to implement this Open Space Master Plan. These are:

- 1. Public meetings.** The City should hold public meetings of the City Council attended by members of the public to conduct public hearings into the Plan and, to obtain input from and, present its findings and recommendations to the Citizens of Countryside and any other interested parties. Two public meetings were held on February 11 and March 11, 1998 and a public hearing to consider the Draft Plan was held at the regular meeting of the City Council on March 25, 1998.
- 2. Adoption of the Plan.** Following the public meeting, it is suggested that the City of Countryside formally adopt the Plan and incorporate any revisions or additions that appear to be necessary inclusions in the Plan. It is often the case that public exposure of the Draft document results in fostering good ideas and suggestions that are made by elected appointed officials, citizens and staff following revision, the Plan should be adopted as a guide for the future.
- 3. Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update.** Should any update be prepared to comprehensive land use plan for the City in the future, the Open Space Master Plan should be incorporated into any resolution for the approval of the Land Use Plan as a Parks and Recreation Plan element or chapter. The two documents should be used together as one policy position to ensure that the land use and growth strategy for the City runs parallel with that for the planning of parks and open space and, recreational facilities and opportunities.

4. **Policies and Budget.** The City should establish a policy of including elements of the Plan in the annual budget and the five year capital improvement budget for the Recreation Department. The Plan should be a working document like the annual budget and the Department's five year capital improvement program so that recommendations of the Plan can be incorporated in the process in a systematic manner for completion. In this way, all elements of the Plan can eventually be implemented.
5. **Land Acquisition.** While some of the additional park land can be acquired through parcel annexations and City growth, a significant amount of additional property will need to be purchased over the Plan period. Such land should be purchased when funds become available. Throughout the implementation of the Plan, the City should actively seek State and federal grant assistance for such acquisition.
6. **Individual Park Master Planning.** A major recommendation of this Plan is to create master plans for parks where considerable improvements are required that can substantially affect the character of the park and enhance recreational values. Such improvements should be carefully planned to ensure that all individual park elements relate well to each other and ensure that the potential of the park is maximized.
7. **Recreation and Leisure Programs.** Programming should be accompanied by the development of a strong marketing plan and public relations philosophy capable of selling the activities and facilities of the City to local residents.

5.4 PROJECT PRIORITIZATION AND PHASING

Project Prioritization and Parameters

In order that projects can be selected and prioritized over the next 10 years, a set of guidelines has been created to aid in the process. There are 15 factors which should be considered in selecting projects that involve improvements to existing facilities. Five exceptions are also listed. The exceptions provide flexibility for the City when unusual circumstances are prevalent or unique opportunities exist. These guidelines were used in establishing a 10 year phased capital improvement program for the projects as shown in Tables 9 and 10.

City of Countryside Project Selection Guidelines

1. Reduces or does not add to operating maintenance costs.
2. Corrects an unsafe equipment or facility condition, or reduces or eliminates City liability.
3. Upgrades basic system infrastructure or deteriorated facilities.

4. Increases user enjoyment of existing and needed facilities or programs.
5. Increases accessibility, usability or services for persons with disabilities.
6. Increases availability, accessibility, or usability of facilities or programs for different demographic groups to meet identified needs.
7. Encourages partnerships with the private sector, other public agencies or neighborhood to meet identified needs.
8. Helps to achieve equitable geographic distribution of facilities or programs while meeting identified needs.
9. Increases public awareness and public involvement of City programs or facilities.
10. Increases leisure opportunities, develops lifetime leisure skills, and increases passive recreation or family participation.
11. Preserves natural or undeveloped areas, improves awareness of the environment or takes advantage of major water features.
12. Provides for a facility or program not previously offered, or, in short supply, that meets an identified need.
13. Provides a basic amenity for a City facility.
14. Enhances revenues which will help support the overall City Recreation Department Mission.
15. Provides a regional trail or greenway linkages which will connect parks, schools, public and private open spaces throughout the City and surrounding area.

City of Countryside
Prioritization & Phasing of Capital Improvements

Table 8

Location	Major Capital Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Total	Phase
		Reduce or not add Maint \$	Unsafe & Reduce Village Liability	Infra & Upgrade Det Fac	Inc Enjoy Existing Fac	Include Access Disability	Include Access All	Neighbor, Public, Private, Partners	Distrib Fac & Prog	Inc. Public Awareness	Increase Leisure Opportunity	Water & Educ & Natural	New of Fac/Prog Short Sup.	Park Basic Amenity	Revenue Producer	Trail Linkage		
Brancatto Park	Play equipment and surfacing Landscaping Site Amenities	1	1		1	1	1	1	1		1			1			9	III
City Park	Little League Field Landscaping Drinking Fountain	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1		1	1			10	I
Countryside Playschool	Play Equipment & Surfacing Landscaping	1	1	1	1	1	1		1		1			1			9	III
Countryside Park	Trail/Path system Parking Lots Fields Play Equipment & Surfacing Picnic Shelter Tennis/Basketball – New/Refurbish Volleyball Skateboard Facility Inline Rink Par Course (Fitness Stations) Site Amenities Landscaping	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1		1	1		1	12	I
Holland's Park	Play Equipment and surfacing Landscaping Site Amenities	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1			1			9	III
Ideal School Park	Landscaping Access Paths				1		1		1		1		1	1		1	7	III
Memorial Park																		
Srejma-Michalek	Play Equipment and Surfacing Landscaping Site Amenities	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1			1			9	II
Woodland Ridge	Play Equipment and Surfacing																	IV
Former United Auto Workers Union Property	Building Conversion/Refurbishing																	II
ODM Property – MP	Acquisition Park Development																	II IV
North of Countryside Plaza – MP	Acquisition Park Development																	II IV
5550 Edgewood	Acquisition Park Development																	III
Plainfield & Brainard	Trail Development																	II

Location	Major Capital Item	Reduce or not add Maint \$	Unsafe & Reduce Village Liability	Infra & Upgrade Det Fac	Inc Enjoy Existing Fac	Include Access Disability	Include Access All	Neighbor, Public, Private, Partners	Distrib Fac & Prog	Inc. Public Awareness	Increase Leisure Opportunity	Water & Educ & Natural	New of Fac/Prog Short Sup.	Park Basic Amenity	Revenue Producer	Trail Linkage	Total	Phase
Countryside Park to Joliet Road	Trai Development																	III
Ideal School to Finn Park	Trail Development																	IV
1211 55 th Street – MP	Acquisition Development																	III
5435 S. Spring St. – MP	Acquisition Development																	V
6 6 th Ave. – OP	Acquisition Park Development																	V
59 th and Kensington – MP	Acquisition Park Development																	I
7334 Maridon – MP	Acquisition Park Development																	II

City of Countryside Project Selection Guidelines—Exceptions

1. Funding is now available for a project that meets recognized needs.
2. City of Countryside interest or preference.
3. A unique acquisition opportunity.
4. Can be supported with user fees.
5. Fulfills a previous commitment with identified needs.

The information showing projects that the City of Countryside should undertake over the next 17 years and their priorities is shown on Table 8. Each existing park is identified and the recommended project is listed. Rankings of each existing park improvement project are made according to the guideline criteria. A high score, would indicate that the City should give the project a very high priority in the implementation schedule over the Plan period. The recommended new facilities have been phased according to an assessment of need in the various neighborhoods of the City utilizing the service area analysis conducted during the planning process.

Phasing

The evaluation criteria previously described were therefore used as guidelines to aid in selecting projects for implementation over the Plan period. Each of the 15 guidelines were reviewed in relation to each improvement at each existing or proposed recreational site. Each project was assigned points in relation to the guidelines. Prioritized phasing of the individual projects was then assigned on a scale of 1 to 4 according to the number of points each project received. Although there will be some capital maintenance projects, they were not included in the schedule.

The recommended implementation program is set up in a total of five phases over the entire Plan period to the year 2023. The description of these 4 phases is as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Phase I: | Top priority for immediate implementation and recommended for improvement and development from June 1, 2007 to May 30, 2009. |
| Phase II: | Essential to the City and are recommended for improvement and development from June 1, 2009 to May 30, 2011. |
| Phase III: | Necessary to the City and recommended for improvement and development from June 1, 2011 to May 30, 2013. |
| Phase IV: | Important to the City and recommended for improvement and development from June 1, 2013 to May 30, 2017. |
| Phase V: | Improvements not completed during the preceding four phases but should be implemented between June 1, 2017 to May 30, 2023. |

City of Countryside Open Space Master Plan
 Phased 10 Year Capital Improvement Program (Detail)

Table 9

Location	Major Capital Item	Phase I (June 1, 2007 - May 30, 2009)	Phase II (June 1, 2009 – May 30, 2011)	Phase III (June 1, 2011 – May 30, 2013)	Phase IV (June 1, 2013 – May 30, 2017)	Phase V (June 1, 2017 - May 30, 2023)
Brancatto Park	Play equipment and surfacing			\$125,000		
	Landscaping			\$15,000		
	Site amenities			\$15,000		
	Totals:			\$155,000		
City Park	Landscaping	\$22,000				
	Totals:	\$22,000				
Countryside Playschool	Play equipment & surfacing			\$96,000		
	Landscaping			\$15,000		
	Totals:			\$111,000		
Countryside Park	Trail/Path system	\$110,000				
	Picnic shelter	\$88,000				
	Totals:	\$198,000				

Location	Major Capital Item	Phase I (June 1, 2007 - May 30, 2009)	Phase II (June 1, 2009 – May 30, 2011)	Phase III (June 1, 2011 – May 30, 2013)	Phase IV (June 1, 2013 – May 30, 2017)	Phase V (June 1, 2017 - May 30, 2023)
Holland's Park	Play equipment and surfacing			\$125,000		
	Landscaping			\$15,000		
	Site amenities			\$15,000		
	Totals:			\$155,000		
Ideal School Park	Landscaping			\$15,000		
	Access paths			\$22,000		
	Fencing			\$40,000		
	Tennis court resurfacing			\$15,000		
	Site amenities			\$22,000		
	Totals:			\$114,000		
Memorial Park		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Totals:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Srejma-Michalek Park	Play equipment and surfacing		\$125,000			
	Landscaping		\$15,000			
	Site amenities		\$22,000			
	Totals:		\$162,000			
Woodland Ridge	Landscaping				\$15,000	
	Site amenities				\$22,000	
	Totals:				\$37,000	

Location	Major Capital Item	Phase I (June 1, 2007 - May 30, 2009)	Phase II (June 1, 2009 – May 30, 2011)	Phase III (June 1, 2011 – May 30, 2013)	Phase IV (June 1, 2013 – May 30, 2017)	Phase V (June 1, 2017 - May 30, 2023)
ODM Property	Park Development				\$160,000	
	Totals:				\$ 160,00	
North of Countryside Plaza	Park Development				\$160,000	
	Totals:				\$160,000	
5550 Edgewood	Park Development			\$160,000		
	Totals:			\$160,000		
Plainfield/Brainard	Trail Development		\$185,000			
Countryside Park to Joliet Rd.	Trail Development			\$103,000		
Ideal School to Countryside Park	Trail Development				\$125,000	
	Totals:		\$185,000	\$103,000	\$125,000	
1211 55 th Street	Park Development			\$160,000		
	Totals:			\$160,000		
5455 S. Spring St.	Park Development					\$160,000
	Totals:					\$160,000
6 6 th Avenue	Park Development					\$160,000
	Totals:					\$160,000
59 th and Kensington Avenue	Park Development	\$160,000				
	Totals:	\$160,000				
7334 Maridon	Park Development		\$160,000			
	Totals:		\$160,000			
Grand Total:		\$380,000	\$521,000	\$958,000	\$482,000	\$320,000

5.5 10 YEAR PHASED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The 17 year phased Capital Improvement Program for the Recreation Department is set out in Table 9 (detail) and Table 10 (summary). An approximate dollar expenditure amount has been assigned to each of the proposed improvements. While the figures reflect the development the recommended new parks in the open space system, land acquisition costs are not included in these figures. Table 10 also includes information regarding the source of potential grant assistance for the individual project items.

The preliminary total gross dollar value of implementing the 10 year capital improvement program is approximately \$2.6 million (based upon a 5.0% inflation rate and subtracting the \$1.8 million in improvements that were completed at Countryside Park in 2001). Such improvements are planned to occur during in the first four phases of implementation as explained above. Any improvements not completed during this period should be rolled over to Phase V of the Plan period between 2017 and 2023. *The City will however be eligible for State and federal land acquisition and development grants that can collectively result in the total net cost to the City being reduced to approximately \$2.3 million over the ten year, four-phase period.* The capital improvement program should not be considered a rigid prescription for the implementation of this Plan, but rather a guide for the City in determining capital expenditures and required grant assistance for the projects, and the means by which these might be distributed over the Plan period based on the prioritization of projects.

5.6 FINANCING THE PLAN

The Capital Improvement Program (Tables 9 and 10) were prepared to identify projects according to their possible year of initiation and to identify them for possible state and federal grants. The accomplishment of all of the projects as outlined in this Plan will require a prolonged and dedicated effort. The Recreation Department will require additional financial resources over and above those which it currently receives from City general and capital improvement funds, grants and other revenues at present. The City received a State Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant for the improvements for Finn Park (now Countryside Park) from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. This provided a \$200,000 in matching grant assistance toward the development of the park, which once completed, the total cost was \$1.8 million.

Other grant sources include: Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) program for trails and highway beautification on State roads, Small Business Administration (SBA) Tree Planting Grants, and, the Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) which is run by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA) for providing local governments with funds for removing architectural barriers to buildings in order to bring them into compliance with ADA standards. This type of funding scenario has set up the model for implementation of future capital projects and it is recommended that the City continue to apply for such grants to help it implement this schedule and leverage the local matching dollars as far as possible.

City of Countryside Open Space Master Plan**Phased 10 Year Capital Improvement Program (Summary)****Table 10**

Location	Amount	Non City Funding	Source	Total City Expenditure
Phase I				
Countryside Park	\$198,000			\$198,000
City Park	\$22,000			\$22,000
59th & Kensington	\$160,000			\$160,000
Phase II				
Srejma-Michalek	\$162,000			\$162,000
Plainfield/Brainard Trail	\$185,000			\$85,000
7334 Maridon	\$160,000	\$100,000	ISTEA	\$160,000
Phase III				
Brancatto Park	\$155,000			\$155,000
Countryside Playschool	\$111,000			\$111,000
Ideal School Park	\$114,000			\$114,000
Holland's Park	\$155,000			\$155,000
Countryside Park to Joliet Road Trail	\$103,000			\$47,000
5550 Edgewood	\$160,000			\$160,000
1211 55 th Street	\$160,000	\$56,000	ISTEA	\$160,000
Phase IV				
ODM Property	\$160,000			60,000
North of Countryside Plaza	\$160,000	\$100,000	OSLAD	\$160,000
Ideal School to Finn Park Trail	\$125,000	\$62,500	Bike Path	\$62,500
Woodland Ridge	\$37,000			\$37,000
Phase V				
5455 S. Spring St.	\$160,000			\$160,000
6 6 th Avenue	\$160,000			\$160,000
Total	\$2,647,000	\$318,500		\$2,328,500

5.7 COORDINATION WITH PUBLIC AGENCIES AND PROPERTY OWNERS

The City of Countryside Recreation Department serves the entire City population including other jurisdictional interests and property owners. Indeed, the City has a well established tradition of cooperation with the Elementary school District # 105. It is vitally important to the success of the Plan that the City continue to cooperate with other public agencies and seek out new avenues for broadening the degree of cooperation. In this regard the City should seek to implement the recommendations of the Plan regarding the solidification of current use agreements with School District # 105 and explore the potential for public-private partnerships such as that which could exist with the Score Tennis & Fitness Center.

5.8 CONCLUSION

In summary, the recommended Open Space Master Plan is proposed to be implemented in five phases. The first four phases should be implemented over a 10 year time period. The fifth phase should occur in the period between 2017 and the end of the Plan period - the year 2023. For the first four phases, a preliminary capital improvement program was prepared with approximate costs attributed to each improvement. The total cost of the improvements to the City is estimated at approximately \$2.3 million to be distributed over the 10 year time-frame of the first four phases. The suggested improvements are designed to enhance existing parks, provide for new parks and facilities where needed and renovate existing parks that have decayed and are in need of repair.

Due to the fact that this Open Space Master Plan is the first of its kind to be prepared for the City, it might be difficult for some residents to comprehend how the implementation of its recommendation over the next 10 years are estimated to cost nearly \$2.3 million. It should be recognized that the while City of Countryside is a fine Community, it is deficient in the total quantity and distribution of its parks and recreational facilities. Countryside can also actively pursue various forms of State and Federal assistance to lessen the financial burden. Countryside is currently at an important crossroads and will need to move ahead with the implementation of this plan if it expects to achieve an adequate level of recreational opportunity for future generations to enjoy.